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PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

MAN UTD TO PLAY IN SYDNEY NEXT JULY

RED DEVILS DOWN UNDER!

Football Federation Australia (FFA) in conjunction with the NSW Government and Destination NSW has announced that English Premier League (EPL) giants Manchester United will play the A-League All Stars at ANZ Stadium in Sydney next July.

The international exhibition match on Saturday 20 July will be exclusive to Sydney in the only appearance by Manchester United in Australia during the club's 2013 pre-season tour.

Manchester United is set to bring out its full squad in preparation for the 2013-14 EPL season.

United's current squad includes England striker Wayne Rooney, Dutch ace Robin van Persie and the evergreen Ryan Giggs.

It will be United's first visit to Australia since the two-match tour in 1999.

The A-League All Stars will represent the best of the Hyundai A-League with the team to be preselected by fans.

FFA CEO David Gallop has hailed the confirmation of the high-profile match as

another great opportunity to showcase Australian football.

"Having Manchester United as the opponent for our first ever A-League All Star game will put the Hyundai A-League on the world stage," said Gallop.

"I'm absolutely delighted that Australian fans will get to see the Red Devils in action against the best A-League players. It's a massive opportunity for our players and one the fans won't want to miss.

"On behalf of the football community, I thank Manchester United, the NSW Government, its agency Destination NSW, and ANZ Stadium for making this tour possible."

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said he's pleased to welcome Manchester United to Sydney.

"I'm delighted that the NSW Government's agency, Destination NSW, in partnership with ANZ Stadium, has won an Australian and New Zealand exclusive to host Manchester United in NSW, the home of world class sport."

"Manchester United will play a not-to-

be-missed match against an A-League All Stars team at ANZ Stadium on Saturday 20 July 2013."

"I'm looking forward to welcoming Manchester United back to Sydney - their first visit to NSW since 1999. Manchester United is the most successful English football club in history, having won 19 Premier League titles, 11 FA Cups and three European Cups, and the match against our A-League team promises to be an exhilarating contest."

"I invite Manchester United fans and football fans across the world to come to Sydney to enjoy the best in world football, in Australia's premier sports and major events city."

Destination NSW CEO, Sandra Chipchase, said: "Destination NSW is proud to have secured another major events coup for NSW. The Manchester United game will generate more than 20,000 overnight international and interstate visitors to Sydney, contributing an estimated \$16 million to the NSW economy."

ANZ Stadium Managing Director, Daryl

Kerry, said: "It's fantastic to have one of the greatest football teams in the world playing at ANZ Stadium. The Manchester United match promises to be the international jewel in the crown for ANZ Stadium's 2013 event schedule."

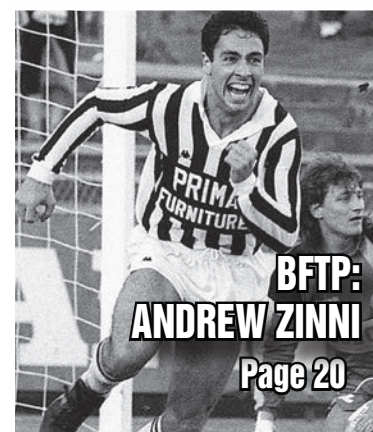
Manchester United Chief Executive, David Gill said, "The game and training camp that will take place in Sydney will be an important part of the team's preparation for the 2013/14 season."

"We are delighted to accept the invitation from the New South Wales Government and Football Federation Australia to visit one of the world's truly great cities.

"There are three main reasons we go on pre-season tour. First and foremost is the team's preparation for the season ahead. But the tour also allows us to engage with our global fan base and network of commercial partners.

"It has been a while since we last visited Sydney and we are looking forward to renewing our relationship with our loyal and enthusiastic Australian fans."

This Week's Line Up



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Futsal Changes good for the game say Qantas Futsalroos

By Russ Gibbs

The FFA Futsal National Championships returns to Canberra in 2013 with a new streamlined format with each State only entering one team per age bracket. Gone are the days of Thunder and Lightning and Cobras and Colts with New South Wales and the ACT reduced to selecting one squad of the best available players. This should increase the level of competition and encourage a truly national feel with each State playing each other in what should be a highly entertaining week of Futsal.

Coming on the back of the 2012 FIFA Futsal World Cup, the FFA National Championships will once again expose the indoor game to the masses with the popularity of the sport soaring and the changes will certainly benefit the game, so says current Qantas Futsalroos captain and former NSW Thunder player Greg Giovenali. "I think every state should be forced to send one team so that the competition is a genuine state versus state," Giovenali said. "One team per state and every team must enter. The FFA should encourage every state to enter the competition." Giovenali himself has realised the pinnacle of the competition playing a pivotal role in the Thunder's victory over the home-town ACT Cobras in the 2012 edition of the National Championships. "I've only played in one championship but we won it in extra-time last year against the ACT and I managed to score two goals so it's a good personal memory for me," he recalled. "With the younger boys it does give you a sense of being on tour when you are away for a whole week at the championships. You're with the boys all day and you can get bored while you are waiting for matches. It's important to realise that it's not just all about the



NSW's Thunder and Lightning with last year's trophy.

glamour of the game time, there's a lot of down time where you have to play cards or Playstation and try to kill time between games. For the older boys it's just important to get high speed regular games at stop-clock conditions as we don't get that very often. The more we get the better. At the same time we need the quality of teams to be better and that means everyone entering."

NSW and Australian international goalkeeper Gavin O'Brien is hoping that, if selected, his team can go all the way and claim a hat-trick of titles having triumphed in the last two tournaments held at the Australian Institute of Sport.

"It's going to magic if we can go three in a row. It'd be a great achievement for the boys," O'Brien commented. "For me personally the last couple of years have been really enjoyable. We've had some great games and now there is a new format it should hopefully improve the quality of the games and make it more of a showpiece. It'll be one game a day rather than two or three which doesn't allow you to play as well as you may have without the crowded fixture list. I'm like any futsal player in Australia, I want to be there and competing in

this event. We have to sacrifice a lot to play in the competition, more time away from home, more time off of your day job and the rest of it, but I certainly plan on being a part of it and coming into the tournament off the back of the FIFA Futsal World Cup should mean we are all in a positive mood and that NSW can finish first again!"

O'Brien's memories of his part in the competition are still vivid, particularly of the day they snuck past Victoria in 2010 to take out the championship on penalties after an epic Grand Final had ended all square at 2-2, with O'Brien emerging as the hero in the shoot-out.

"I conceded a goal in right at the end of the match when they took a timeout and prepared a set move," O'Brien remembered. "You're told to keep the ball in the centre of your body and I did that but it wasn't good enough and it went straight between my legs. Fully five or ten seconds later I thought to myself that this is going to extra time and we are going to win this on penalties and sometimes sport is so kind to you and I was fortunate to save a couple of penalties. The first save was from Fernando [De Moraes] and then one hit the post and the last one I tipped onto



Rob Varela (Assistant Coach), Fernando De Moraes, Greg Giovenali (Captain), Arthur Kazas (Strength and Conditioning) at the Japan v Libya match.

the post to win it. To be captain and part of that side was awesome. It was an amazing feeling and to take that into the Final twelve months later against the ACT was brilliant. The game was still a very close affair and to win two in a row was exhausting but a fantastic feeling so hopefully we can complete a hat-trick in 2013."

Qantas Futsalroos team mate Fernando De Moraes remembers that spot-kick saga all too well. "Penalties are penalties," the Brazilian born naturalised Australian reminisced. "It's hard to understand sometimes when you miss and you are out of the competition. Gavin [O'Brien] is a great goalkeeper and a very experienced player who's been to a couple of World Cups. It happens in the game though. I had a great tournament and it would have been great had we ended up winning the tournament, but sometimes it doesn't go your way, but it was a good experience."

As for whether the silky skills of Fernando would be on show at the FFA Futsal National Championships well that would depend on how the playmaker was feeling post FIFA Futsal World Cup.

"I want to have a rest after the World Cup as I have been playing indoor and outdoor for a while now, so I need a little break, but I'll see," Fernando commented. "If I feel good when I get back to Melbourne I would really like to play. We changed the mentality in Victoria. Back in the day it was just another trip, another holiday, a week off work. But nowadays we want to win, we want to be on the top and we work hard for it. We have a lot of good young players coming through and if they think like that then we have a good chance."

Whilst Victoria and NSW will no doubt be among the favourites for the championship there's still the not insignificant threat of the ACT to consider. O'Brien is adamant that the home state poses a real threat to NSW hopes of a treble but is sure that the decision to reduce the entrants to one per state should create a memorable competition.

"For a long time that I have been involved, there has always been a rivalry between NSW and the ACT," the Qantas Futsalroos three-time FIFA World Cup representative said. "For a long time ACT dominated but over the last few

years it has evened out and NSW have got their roll on and have won a couple. Every year has been different and this new format should make the games a lot closer and a lot more unpredictable. It's going to be hard to cram twice as many players into one side but I think that possibly it may create a bit more value in the shirt. It's certainly going to be a change as they Thunder and Lightning aspect has been around for quite some time, as have the Cobras and Colts in the ACT, so it's going to be a bit of a learning curve and it might take a couple of years to get the blend right as it has been so long since it has been only one team per state. It might inspire a few blokes to commit further to the NSW cause and if you do well, and NSW are traditionally a strong outfit, that you will get exposure to the national selectors and a chance to play for the Futsalroos."

And, if the competition does produce further Qantas Futsalroos representatives, then the changes will certainly have been for the better. Either way the next week of competition will be fast and furious and full of skills as each State fights for the right to be crowned FFA National Champions.



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Socceroos Through By The Skin of Its Teeth

By Adrian Deans

Australia qualified for the East Asian Cup tournament last week, but qualification (while important for the future development of the squad and for the FFA's coffers) almost happened in the background as argument raged over Holger's selections and strategy.

In the wake of our performance several weeks ago in beating South Korea, using some up and coming stars in the process, a fresh wave of optimism had washed though Socceroos supporters who had been unhappy with Holger's over-reliance on the Over 30s.

It seemed as though the enforced selection of a mainly A-League squad would finally oblige him to give the kids a chance and we were all excited to see names like Rogic, Mooy, Babalj, Behich and Marrone in the line-up – especially as the manager had declared he would be rotating selection to deal with the demands of four games in eight days.

But to our consternation, he picked his oldest and most experienced team against Hong Kong – and then set them up defensively and just scraped a win through Brett Emerton's last gasp effort.

Cue the "Holger Out!" hysteria, which got even louder two days later when he selected the same side to play North Korea, our main rivals in the group, who were already plus 10 on goal difference.



Phew! Large haul results in the final two games ensured the Socceroos of East Asia Cup qualification.

It's fair to say the team did not cover themselves with glory that night and many were noticeably tiring. In both games, to that point, the Socceroos had looked disorganised and toothless until Rogic entered the fray. With a 1 – 1 draw against North Korea, the competition was bound to be decided on goal difference and we had a hell of a lot of ground to make up. Finally the kids got their chance against Guam and the resultant 9 – 0 thumping was memorable for Archie's six minute hat trick and the debut of Aaron Mooy. Yes, it was only Guam, but he played awfully well in the number six role.

Finally, we played Chinese Taipei, knowing that we needed to win by five. Holger reverted mainly to his veterans for the game (but included Mooy) and we had the five goals wrapped up by the 34th minute and cruised to qualification with another three – missing numerous chances along the way. In the end, you can hardly criticise the coach. His tactics paid off – just – but what exactly did he learn about his squad (besides the fact that an A-League selection can at least thrash Guam)? To some extent, this was a missed opportunity to have a closer look at the players who might be representing us

in Brazil (presuming we make it – which is not at all certain) by playing them in the game that mattered. I really hope that Holger will have the confidence going forward to include the likes of Rogic, Mooy, Behich and Marrone in the full Socceroos squad, because these boys are the future – which is starting right now.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets, published by Vulgar Press and available in all good book shops. (ebook available also).

East Asian Cup Qualifiers										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1. Australia	4	3	1	0	19	1	+18	10		
2. Korea DPR	4	3	1	0	16	2	+14	10		
3. Hong Kong	4	2	0	2	4	6	-2	6		
4. Ch Taipei	4	0	1	3	2	17	-15	1		
5. Guam	4	0	1	3	2	17	-15	1		
Guam 1 – 2 Hong Kong										
Taipei 1 – 6 Nth Korea										
Nth Korea 5 – 0 Guam										
Hong Kong 0 – 1 Australia										
Chinese Taipei 1 – 1 Guam										
North Korea 1 – 1 Australia										
Guam 0 – 9 Australia										
Hong Kong 2 – 0 Chinese Taipei										
Hong Kong 0 – 4 North Korea										
Australia 8 – 0 Chinese Taipei										

Mariners to honour Alex Wilkinson

CENTRAL Coast Mariners great Alex Wilkinson will be back at Bluetongue Stadium this Friday evening when Graham Arnold's side challenge John Aloisi's Melbourne Heart outfit in Hyundai A-League round 11.

Wilkinson departed the Mariners in July to take up a deal with K-League giant Jeonbuk Hyundai, however with the 2012 domestic season in Korea Republic over, the long-serving former Central Coast skipper is taking the opportunity to catch-up with family and friends in Australia.

Wilkinson will watch the match against the red and white half of Melbourne from the stands, and at half time will be presented with a token of the Club's appreciation for his years of service in the yellow and navy.

Indeed, it was in Central Coast's round 8, 3-1 win over Melbourne Heart at Bluetongue Stadium last season that Alex Wilkinson made his 150th Hyundai A-League appearance for the Club.

In total, Wilkinson made 206 competitive appearances for the Central Coast Mariners, winning two Hyundai A-League premierships, appearing in three Hyundai A-League deciders, and leading the Club in its first two forays into Asia's top club competition – the AFC Champions League.



Dugandzic ruled out for rest of season

Melbourne Heart FC winger Mate Dugandzic has been ruled out for the rest of the 2012-13 Hyundai A-League season after surgery to his broken right foot.

Dugandzic was sidelined after colliding with Adelaide United goalkeeper Eugene Galekovic in the round seven clash at Hindmarsh Stadium on November 17. Dugandzic's initial prognosis on his fractured metatarsal was that he would miss 12 weeks; however, additional scans and surgery on Thursday revealed the extent of damage to both bone and ligament and he is likely to be out for up to six months. "It's never great to lose such an important player so early in the season," said Head Coach John Aloisi.

"Mate was a critical player for us least season and now the challenge is for another emerging player, like Golgol [Mebrathtu] or Ben [Garuccio], to step-up when they get an opportunity and prove that they can be an elite player, which Mate did last season." John Aloisi also ruled out the club recruiting an Injury Replace-



ment Player to cover the loss of Dugandzic. "We have enough attacking depth in the squad to cover the loss," Aloisi said. "We saw last week that players from our Youth League team were able to step up and help us get a result, so that's the path we will go down if we need to."

Caceres extends Coast stay

PRECOCIOUS Central Coast Mariners midfielder Anthony Caceres has put pen to paper on a new two-season contract with the Club, ensuring he will remain in the yellow and navy until the end of the 2014/15 Hyundai A-League season.

One of the Mariners' brightest young stars, 20-year-old Caceres progressed through Central Coast's National Youth League system before signing his first professional deal with the Club ahead of the Group Stage of the 2012 AFC Champions League.

After impressing in pre-season this year, Caceres suffered a freak elbow injury which hampered his prospects of featuring in the early part of the current A-League campaign.

But after a string of standout displays in the National Youth League competition and consistent efforts in training, the creative, composed midfield conductor has been rewarded with an extended deal with the Hyundai A-League table-toppers.

"I feel very privileged to be at a Club where they give young players an opportunity," Caceres said. "I'm surrounded by good people and I couldn't be happier."

Caceres added that despite his pre-season injury holding his progress back slightly, he feels he



is close to his best and can make the transition from NYL star to Hyundai A-League regular.

"We've got a bunch of great players both technically and physically, and they're just good blokes all round," he said.

"I've taken a lot away from the pre-season and the first few rounds. I've been working on my fitness a fair bit and hitting the gym, trying to put on some size. In time I think I can step up to A-League level."

Central Coast Mariners boss, Graham Arnold, is confident that Caceres will be gracing the Hyundai A-League stage soon. Indeed, the Mariners boss is excited by the potential of the former Marconi

Stallions man, and believes he can develop into a key player for the Club.

"He's a player of the future of the Club and he's got a big part to play in what we will be about in the future," Arnold said.

"He's a wonderful kid and it's great that we were able to sign him so quickly, especially with other Clubs hovering around."

"They (rival Clubs) watch the Youth League games and he's the best player in the Youth League every week."

"I think you will see him in our first team by the end of the season."

"Hopefully we'll be announcing some more signings in the next couple of weeks as well," he said.

Moreover, Central Coast Mariners Chairman, Mr Peter Turnbull, welcomed the news that Caceres will remain a Mariner until 2015.

"Anthony Caceres had a promising start to the season hampered by injury, but is now back in full training and is showing his class daily," Turnbull said.

"He deserves his longer contract, and we expect him to develop in the same way the Club has developed previous youngsters such as Danny Vukovic, Mustafa Amini, Mathew Ryan, Tom Rogic, Trent Sainsbury, Bernie Ibini, and Mitchell Duke."

Jeronimo to remain a Red till 2015

Dynamic Adelaide United FC forward Jeronimo Neumann has agreed to terms with the club for a further two seasons. One of the two new Argentineans along with Marcelo Carrusca, signed by the Reds this season, Neumann has found a new lease of life here in Adelaide after seven years playing professionally in his homeland, split up by a year in England at Barnsley.

Reds Football Director, Michael Petrillo said the Club was very happy to have been able to extend the contract with Jeronimo beyond this current season. "It's terrific to see players of the quality of Jeronimo come into the A-League in the first instance and even better when they stick around for longer terms so to have "Jero" here for the next two seasons speaks volumes for the Club and what we are trying to build here. Negotiations went very smoothly and we have only been awaiting his release from his previous club Sol de America in Paraguay which arrived last night".

Neumann will remain a Red until 30 April 2015 and is the second major re-signing for the Club after securing Cassio for a further two seasons last month.



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SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	10	7	2	1	19	8	11	23
2 Adelaide United	10	7	1	2	17	9	8	22
3 Melbourne Victory	10	5	1	4	17	20	-3	16
4 West Sydney Wanderers	10	4	1	5	6	8	-2	13
5 Newcastle Jets	10	4	1	5	14	19	-5	13
6 Wellington Phoenix	10	3	3	4	13	12	1	12
7 Melbourne Heart	10	3	3	4	12	12	0	12
8 Perth Glory	10	3	2	5	9	10	-1	11
9 Brisbane Roar	10	3	1	6	13	13	0	10
10 Sydney FC	10	3	1	6	14	23	-9	10

THIS WEEK	ROUND 11	FIXTURE	VENUE	LOCAL	AEDT
	Fri Dec 14	Central Coast Mariners v Melbourne Heart	Bluetongue Stadium	7:30pm	7:30pm
	Fri Dec 14	Perth Glory v Newcastle Jets	nib Stadium	6:45pm	9:45pm
	Sat Dec 15	Melbourne Victory v Brisbane Roar	AAMI Park	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat Dec 15	Sydney FC v West Sydney Wanderers	Allianz Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun Dec 16	Adelaide United v Wellington Phoenix	Hindmarsh Stadium	4:30pm	5:00pm

NEXT WEEK	ROUND 12	FIXTURE	VENUE	LOCAL	AEDT
	Fri Dec 21	West Sydney Wanderers v Adelaide United	Parramatta Stadium	7:00pm	7:00pm
	Fri Dec 21	Brisbane Roar v Perth Glory	Suncorp Stadium	8:00pm	9:00pm
	Sat Dec 22	Wellington Phoenix v Central Coast Mariners	Westpac Stadium	5:00pm	3:00pm
	Sat Dec 22	Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC	Hunter Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat Dec 22	Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory	AAMI Park	7:45pm	7:45pm

ROUND 10 RESULTS

Western Sydney Wanderers 1
(Ono 87)

Brisbane Roar 0

Crowd: 6755

Venue: Parramatta Stadium

Wellington Phoenix 1
(Brookie pen 90+2)

Sydney FC 2

(Ryall 45+1, Grant 69)

Crowd: 7,375

Venue: Westpac Stadium

Melbourne Heart 1
(Mebrahtu 89')

Perth Glory 0

Crowd: 4500

Venue: AAMI Park

Newcastle Jets 0

Central Coast Mariners 2

(McBreen, 48', 66')

Crowd: 13,112

Venue: Hunter Stadium

Adelaide United 4

(Kostopoulos 2, Ferreira 21, 32, Carrusca 25)

Melbourne Victory 2

(Nabbout 5, Rojas 47)

Crowd: 14,115

venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

9 - Daniel McBREEN
(Mariners)

7 - Jeremy BROCKIE (Phoenix)

6 - Marco ROJAS (Victory)

5 - Emile HESKEY (Jets)

Alessandro DEL PIERO (SFC)

Dario VIDOSIC (Adelaide U)

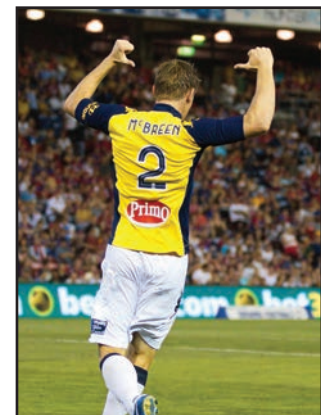
Besart BERISHA (Roar)

4- Jeronimo NEUMANN

(AUGC)

Ryan GRIFFITHS (Jets)

Andrew NABBOUT (Victory)



Mariner Daniel McBreen is proving to be a real poacher in the penalty area this season.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 10

Compiled by Andrew Bishara



GK: Vedran Janjetovic (Sydney FC)

Put in a consistent performance against Wellington and is giving his position in the team no harm with a confident display.

CB: Pascal Bosschaart (Sydney FC)

Has relished since the arrival of Farina. Missed out on a clean sheet, thanks to his teammates' silly challenge, but nevertheless, was a force in the backline.

CB: Michael Beauchamp (West Sydney Wanderers)

Not many though the Wanderers would be so high up the table in their inaugural season. Credit has to be given to captain Beauchamp who has lead the line and marshaled the backline superbly.

CB: Josh Rose (Central Coast)

Continues his stellar form with another brave performance in the Derby on Saturday. Consistently provided an outlet on the wing (he set up the opener) as well as being defensive sound. One of the best full-backs in the league at present.

RM: Fabio Ferreira (Adelaide United)

One of the buys of the season. Started the slaughter, providing the goal for Kostopoulos and scoring a peach of a goal. Another brilliant attacking showing.

CM: Marcelo Carrusca (Adelaide United)

Marcus Flores' replacement ran the show and is providing the missing piece in the Adelaide midfield with sparkling results. A wonderful, dominant performance.

CM: Patrick Gerhardt (Melbourne Heart)

Was all over the park against the Glory, bossing them around. His importance to the team is growing.

LM: Marcos Rojas (Melbourne Victory)

The only positive on a bad night for the Victory. Consistently provided an outlet for his side, and tried his best to get his team back in it. Assisted and scored both his team's goals.

ST: Evan Kostopoulos (Adelaide)

Was part of the riot that ran over the Victory. Scored twice to break his duck and open his account for the season.

ST: Daniel McBreen (Central Coast)

The evergreen McBreen settled the F3 Derby with two beautifully struck goals, to continue his consistent form this season, sending both the Mariners and himself to the top of the charts.

ST: Josip Tadic (Melbourne Heart)

It wasn't just because he set up the game's winner, but everything positive in the Heart's play came through him. Providing a link from the midfield to attack and was unlucky not to have scored.

Coach: Frank Farina (Sydney FC)

His decision to double up on training sessions, looked like a sign of him punishing the Sydney squad. If it was, it worked. Sydney broke their winless streak and recorded their first win Wellington since 2008. Doing it without Alessandro Del Piero, as well as playing some decent football, was more of a bonus.

Star Man

Marcelo Carrusca
Adelaide Utd



United fans have struggled to get over their former talisman in Flores. But the arrival of Carrusca will make them forget him. The Argentine is a genuine star and his importance is paramount to Adelaide.

Thank God It's Friday... **GW is available at all good newsagents every Friday**

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Wellington Phoenix



1

Sydney FC



2

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 1
(Jeremy Brockie 91)
Sydney FC 2 (Sebastian Ryall 45, Rhyen Grant 70)
Venue: Westpac Stadium
Referee: Kris Griffiths-Jones

Sydney FC: 20. Vedran Janjetovic, 2. Sebastian Ryall, 3. Fabio, 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 6. Jason Culina (9. Paul Reid '61), 8. Adam Griffiths, 12. Blake Powell (24. Hagi Gligor '89), 15. Terry McFlynn (C), 21. Yairo Yau, 22. Ali Abbas, 23. Rhyen Grant (14. Mitch Mallia '78).
Sub Not Used: 1. Ivan Necevski.
Yellow Cards: McFlynn 13 And 85, Powell 37, Abbas 77, Griffiths 91.
Red Card: McFlynn 85.

Wellington Phoenix: 1. Mark Paston, 7. Leo Bertos, 18. Ben Sigmund, 22. Andrew Durante (C), 3. Tony Lochhead, 2. Manny Muscat, 6. Alex Smith (16. Louis Fenton '54), 17. Vince Lia, 8. Paul Ifill (9. Benjamin Totori '71), 10. Stein Huysegems (12. Tyler Boyd '54), 11. Jeremy Brockie.
Sub Not Used: 30. Griffin McMaster.
Yellow Cards: Brockie 9, Bertos 74.

Resurgent Sydney FC Topple Hapless Phoenix

By Joe Gallagher

Frank Farina's reign as Sydney FC coach is off to a great start with the Sky Blues registering their third win of the season in Wellington on Sunday.

The 2-1 win, while not enough to improve Sydney's position at the foot of the ladder, means Farina's side are now just two points from the top six having picked up four points from his first two games in charge.

Wellington Phoenix remain fifth but the loss – their second at home this season – sees Ricki Herbert's side lose touch with the leading pack. The scoreline flatters a Phoenix side who barely threatened until a flurry in the final five minutes.

Wellington were unchanged from the side which dealt a 1-0 win to Western Sydney last weekend, while Farina was still without Brett Emerton (international duty) and star marquee Alessandro del Piero due to injury.

The opening half was not much of a spectacle, with the referee's whistle and both sides' inability to maintain possession breaking up the flow of the game.

After 16 minutes Yairo Yau blazed his effort high and wide when found in space by Jason Culina. The best chance for the home side came as Jeremy Brockie volleyed a Paul Ifill cross into the side netting in an otherwise dull first 45 minutes.

But in stoppage time, Wellington paid the price for affording too much space to the dangerous Culina. The midfielder's cross to the head of Sebastian Ryall was inch-perfect. Ryall's finish left Mark Paston with no chance in goal, and the Phoenix went into the sheds a goal down.

Whatever Herbert said at half time failed to do the trick – the second period was more of the same for the hosts. They continued



Terry McFlynn (SFC) and Phoenix's Ben Sigmund and Tyler Boyd get airborne. Photo: PETER McDONALD

	Match Stats	
2	Saves	3
4	Attempts on target	4
5	Attempts off target	5
53%	Possession	47%
3	Corners	2
2	Offsides	3
17	Fouls committed	23

to fail to string together a set of passes, lacked movement off the ball and coughed up possession with alarming ease. Herbert's response was to introduce Benjamin Totori, Tyler Boyd, and Louis Fenton – who had terrorised the Sky Blues in their most recent meeting.

But it was the away side who scored the decisive goal, Terry McFlynn's superb through ball finding Rhyen Grant, who beat the offside trap and slotted the ball into Paston's net in front of the travelling fans.

It took until the final five minutes for Wellington to display

some urgency in attack, and they were gifted an opening back into the match as McFlynn handled Vince Lia's shot and was given a second yellow card. The handball should have been punished with a penalty kick, but the referee adjudged that contact had been made outside the area. Brockie's resulting free kick was straight at Janjetovic.

But in stoppage time Wellington did win a spot-kick. Fenton's ball in found Manny Muscat, who was hauled to ground by Adam Griffiths. Brockie converted from 12 yards to score his seventh goal in six games.

The drama was not done there, as only a sprawling save by Vedran Janjetovic kept Brockie from a miraculous brace in the dying seconds. The New Zealand international's header was goal-bound until the keeper palmed it wide.

Wellington were unable to find another goal and Sydney hung on to record their first win in five matches, their first victory against the Phoenix in five attempts and their first in Wellington since 2008.

The result was a fair reflection of a match in which the hosts were extraordinarily flat, and registered just four shots on target in

the entire match. To have come away with a point from this match would have been an injustice, a point Herbert acknowledged in his post-match interview.

A resurgent Sydney fly home for the Sydney Derby next weekend, while Wellington are on the road again to face Adelaide United at Hindmarsh.

Curiously, it has been their performances on the road that have kept the Phoenix in the hunt this season, as their form at Westpac Stadium has deserted them. A worrying sign for Herbert is that a trip to New Zealand is no longer as daunting as it once was.



Wellington's Alex Smith flicks the switch for some turbo dribbling.

Photo: PETER McDONALD



Thou Shalt Not Pass: Wellington's Ben Sigmund may have lost his footing but is reluctant to surrender possession. Photo: PETER McDONALD



Santo, Sam & Ed Podcast

Santo Cilauro, Sam Pang and Ed Kavalee are back in town with their own unique take on events of the week.

Their brief is simple - 7 days, 3 guys, no agenda.

Podcast available on iTunes

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PICS OF ROUND 10

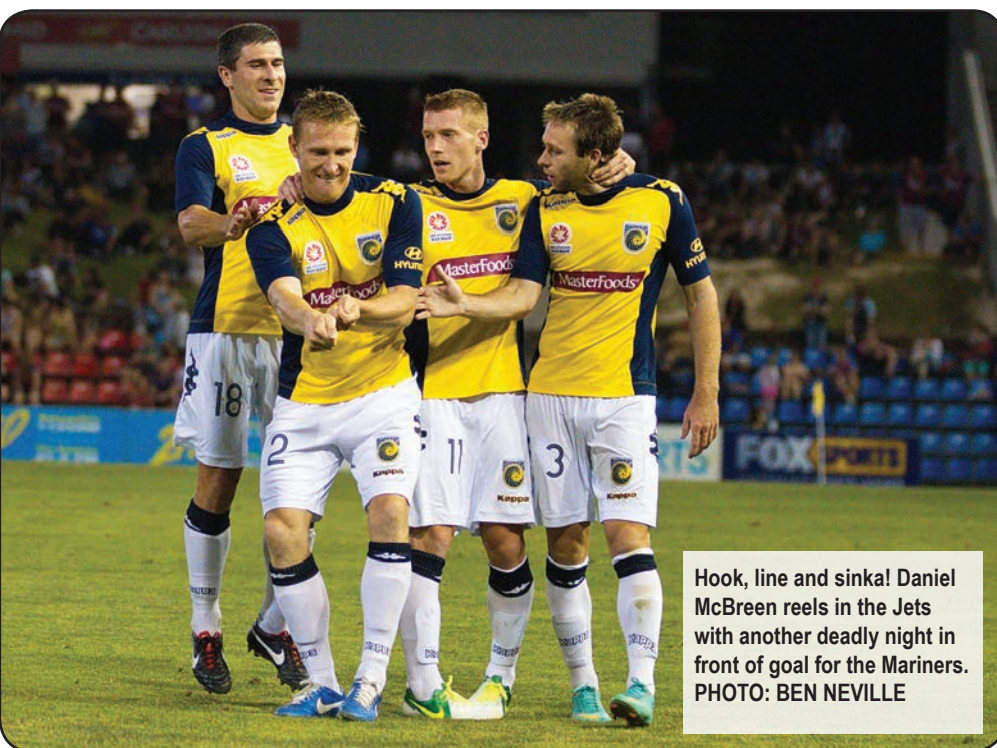
Les Shorrocks
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Picture Page



Shinji Ono converts the spot kick and condemns Roar to yet another 1-0 defeat this season. Photo: ALI ERHAN



Perth Glory coach Ian Ferguson does an impression of Luciano Pavarotti. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Hook, line and sinka! Daniel McBreen reels in the Jets with another deadly night in front of goal for the Mariners. PHOTO: BEN NEVILLE



Hayden Fox, John Aloisi and Clint Bolton share the after-match joy with match winner Golgol Mabrahtu. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Top quality football has the Adelaide United public out in force. PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER



Argentine import Marcelo Carrusca with his well deserved Man of the Match award. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Michael Beauchamp and Besart Berisha are brothers in arms. Photo: ALI ERHAN



Is this Wembley 1977? Scotland fans, oops, Wanderers fans invade Parramatta Stadium. Photo: ALI ERHAN



The Reds are so hot at the moment they are absolutely smokin' !!! Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (Gk)
2. Daniel McBreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
5. Zachary Anderson
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson (c)
8. Adriano Pellegrino
9. Bernie Ibini
10. Tomas Rogic
13. Brent Griffiths
14. Michael McGlinchey
15. Brad McDonald
16. Trent Sainsbury
17. Anthony Caceres
18. Nick Montgomery
19. Mitchell Duke
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
21. Mile Sterjovski
23. Adam Kwasnik
- *Five to be omitted

In: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 10. Tomas Rogic (both return from Qantas Socceroos duty), 13. Brent Griffiths, 15. Brad McDonald, 17. Anthony Caceres (all promoted), 21. Mile Sterjovski (returns from injury), 23. Adam Kwasnik (promoted)

Out: 11. Oliver Bozanic (Mild Concussion – 1 week), 30. David Bradasevic (Gk) (returns to NYL)

Unavailable: 22. James Oates (Ankle – 2 months)



Glory Line Up

1. Danny Vukovic (gk)
3. Bas van den Brink
4. Billy Mehmet
5. Steve Pantelidis
6. Nick Ward
7. Jacob Burns (c)
8. Dean Heffernan
9. Shane Smeltz
10. Liam Miller
11. Adrian Zahra
12. Ryo Nagai
13. Travis Dodd
14. Steven McGarry
15. Brandon O'Neill
17. Chris Harold
18. Jesse Makarounas
19. Josh Risdon
21. Scott Jamieson
23. Michael Thwaite
30. Lewis Italiano (gk)
- *five to be omitted

Ins: 10. Liam Miller (returns from injury), 12. Ryo Nagai (returns from injury), 21. Scott Jamieson (returns from international duty), 23. Michael Thwaite (returns from international duty),

Outs: Nil

Unavailable: 16. Evan Berger (hamstring – indefinite)

CC Mariners v Melbourne Heart

By Adrian Deans

People often say that the A-League has gone to a new level over the last two and a bit seasons, but I would suggest that the Mariners have lifted yet again.

They are the stand out team, so far, in Season 8, but for the last two weeks they were missing three of their biggest stars. Mat Ryan and Tom Rogic were away with the (ultimately victorious) Socceroos and Mile Sterjovski was out injured – and look what they achieved. They defeated the ladder leaders to go top themselves, then won away in the F3 derby.

And played ruthless, methodical football in the process.

This is a special team that Graham Arnold has put together, and when they are back playing with the full deck (as Daniel McBreen appeared to be doing when celebrating his first goal the other night), then God help the rest.

Or so you would think.

That's the thing about the A-League. Form can be so fleeting in a salary-capped competition, and rarely do we see a sustained run. Brisbane of course had their famous streak across Seasons 6 and 7, and at the risk of putting the kiss of death on the Mariners – are we seeing the beginnings of another significant non-losing

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #CCMvMH

Beginnings of a Streak?

The Odds

Mariners 1.60
Draw 4.25
Heart 6.00

Referee: Lucien Laverdure

streak?

You can sense the confidence surging in the Central Coast camp. There is genuine depth and competition for places – in contrast to other clubs where the ringing of changes is more to do with coaches searching for a successful combination. Every week Arnie has decisions to make based on more than 11 blokes putting their hand up and demanding selection – a nice problem to have.

One of the season's real delights is the form of Daniel McBreen. So often in the past he's been content to be the valuable squad man – coming on at the death

Fri Dec 14 Bluetongue Stdm 7:30pm



ABC Radio Coverage
- 720 & ABC Local Radio Western Australia,
1233 ABC Newcastle,
Grandstand Digital
and Online

to provide a bit of guidance and grab the occasional goal. This year his impact has been stunning, and his technique in front of goal a real lesson for the up-and-comers. When I mentioned to him on the weekend that he was only one goal away from starting contract negotiations for another season, he looked at me like I was an idiot. I suspect he is already negotiating a new contract, but if the Mariners don't move quickly to shore him up for next year, someone else will.

The Heart, however, are not without their own stars. They get Marrone, Behich and Garcia back from Socceroos duty – and

I, for one, see Marrone and Behich as bona fide contenders for the Socceroos first team over the next couple of years. I'd have to say I was awfully impressed with young Jeremy Walker filling in for Marrone in the last two weeks. He's a real talent and will certainly have a fine career.

But the Mariners will be just a bit too strong this time.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores.

**Kiss of Death
Mariners 2-0 Heart**

Perth Glory v Newcastle Jets

By Juanita Shepherd

It's been a tumultuous season for Perth Glory; they haven't played consistently with a lot of highs and lows, they've seen thrilling victories and crushing defeats, so anything can happen when they take on Newcastle Jets at nib Stadium on December 14.

The Jets are a formidable force to be reckoned with, winning all their pre-season games including their game against Brisbane Roar, the defending champions of last season's A-League, with Gary van Egmond in charge the Newcastle Jets are gaining a reputation as a intimidating opponent.

Then there's the small matter of Emilie Heskey, who signed to the Jets on September 21 for the 2012/2013 season. With the world renowned English Premier League to his name there is not much that Emilie Heskey can't do, except perhaps break through the Glory's defences.

While the Jets are no easy team to take on, it should be noted that the last time Perth Glory played them on home turf they beat them 3-2.

Glory's defences are impenetrable and with the combined efforts and skills of Thwaite, Smeltz, Miller and Mehmet the Newcastle Jets will have to give it all they've got to score the much

The Odds

Glory 1.90
Draw 3.50
Jets 4.20

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #PGvJETS

needed winning goal and gain those coveted points which both teams will be after.

Perth Glory and Newcastle Jets are both strong teams with a number of players who have been promoted from the youth squad. There is a possibility that the game might just come down to the fact that the younger players from both teams spend the full 90 minutes shadowing each other to let the veterans from both teams go for goal. Glory's Josh Risdon who was promoted from the youth squad has definitely proven himself in previous matches and

Fri Dec 14 nib Stadium 9:45pm



ABC Radio Coverage -
774 & ABC Local Radio
Victoria, 720 & ABC
Local Radio Western
Australia, Online,
Grandstand Digital
Melbourne & Perth.

Referee: Ben Williams

Glory and Jets seek to put campaigns back on track

it will be interesting to see how he plays against Newcastle Jets Mitchell Oxborrow, who like Risdon was promoted from the youth squad to the A-League. The other Glory players will be kept occupied by the skills of Tiago, Josh Mitchell, Scott Neville (a former Glory player) and Michael Bridges.

It will be an interesting game to watch, very unpredictable with the chances of anything happening. Glory lost their smooth winning streak on home turf but if they go into the game with their famed steely determination chances are

they will come away with a win, having said that Newcastle Jets should be given the credit that they are due. Under the watchful eye of Van Egmond and with the combined forces of Tiago, Neville and Heskey not to mention Birighitti who is a worthy match against Danny Vukovic, the game could swing in favour of the Jets. Anything can happen when Perth Glory takes on Newcastle Jets.

**Kiss of Death
Glory 2-2 Jets**

MELBOURNE HEART



Heart Line Up

1. Clint Bolton (GK)
2. Michael Marrone
4. Simon Colosimo
5. Fred
6. Patrick Gerhardt
8. Matthew Thompson
9. Dylan Macallister
10. Josip Tadic
11. Richard Garcia
14. GoGol Mebrahtu
15. David Williams
16. Aziz Behich
17. Jason Hoffman
18. David Vrankovic
20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
22. Nick Kalmar
- *one to be omitted

Ins: 2. Michael Marrone (returns from international duty – Qantas Socceroos), 11. Richard Garcia (returns international duty – Qantas Socceroos), 16. Aziz Behich (returns from international duty)

Outs: 24. Sam Mitchinson (omitted), 25. Jeremy Walker (omitted)

Unavailable: 13. Jonatan Germano, 19. Benjamin Garuccio (ankle 4-5 weeks), 23. Mate Dugandzic (broken foot 8-12 weeks), 31. Vince Grella (fitness - undisclosed)



Jets Line Up

2. Scott Neville
3. Tiago Calvano
4. Josh Mitchell
5. Dominik Ritter
8. Ruben Zadkovich
9. Emile Heskey
11. Connor Chapman
12. Josh Brillante
15. Craig Goodwin
17. James Virgili
22. Adam Taggart
23. Ryan Griffiths
24. Mitch Oxborrow
26. Andrew Hoole
30. Jack Duncan (gk)
33. Matt Nash (gk)
- *one to be omitted

Ins: Tiago Calvano, Josh Mitchell, Adam Taggart, Ryan Griffiths, Mitch Oxborrow and Andrew Hoole

Outs: James Brown, Bernardo Ribeiro, Taylor Regan, Jacob Pepper and Michael Bridges

Unavailable: Ben Kennedy (knee), Ben Kantarovski (knee), Mark Birighitti (cheekbone) and Jobe Wheelhouse (knee)

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Victory Line Up

1. Tando VELAPHI (GK)
3. Adama TRAORE
4. Petar FRANJIC
5. Mark MILLIGAN
6. Leigh BROXHAM
7. Gui FINKLER
8. Jonathan BRU
9. Marcos FLORES
10. Archie THOMPSON
11. Marco ROJAS
13. Diogo FERREIRA
14. Billy CELESKI
15. Sam GALLAGHER
16. Theo MARKELIS
17. Jimmy JEGGO
19. Isaka CERNAK
21. Spase DILEVSKI
23. Adrian LEIJER (c)
26. Andrew NABOUT
39. Nathan COE (GK)

Ins: Adama Traore (returns from injury), Spase DILEVSKI (returns from injury), Theo MARKELIS (returns from suspension), Archie THOMPSON (returns from international duty), Mark MILLIGAN (returns from international duty)

Out: Nil
Unavailable: Nil

Melbourne Victory v Brisbane Roar

Sat Dec 15 AAMI Park 5:30pm

By Andrew Bishara

If there is one clash this weekend, where both teams are coming off bad weeks, it would be this one. Brisbane Roar, champion of the A-League, sit equal bottom of the table with Sydney. Few would have expected the champions to be in this position that the start of the season.

They have already lost six times this season. The sixth: their second 1-0 loss to the West Sydney Wanderers this season. It was a match that summed up the Roar's season so far: dominant in possession and creating a hat-full of chances, but a poor lack of execution in front of goal. For a team known for its attacking vibrancy, they have only scored 13 goals so far this season. Their goal difference is 0. Something that many thought would not be case with the Roar.

Coach Rado Vidosic, maintains though that if the Roar keep playing the way they have this season, their luck will change. "We just need to keep working and keep believing in ourselves," said Vidosic.

"When you look at the clear-cut chances, we probably had more. All we need to do is believe in our system and keep working hard. Sooner or later, our luck will turn and we're going to start winning some games."

Roar looking for victory in Melbourne



Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #MvVROAR

Referee: Jarred Gillett

The Odds

Victory 2.38
Draw 3.40
Roar 3.15

On the other side of the coin, Melbourne Victory has been in good form, apart from last weekend's demolition. Torn apart in the first 30 minutes, by a rampart Adelaide side, Victory succumbed to a 4-2 loss. This will be their chance to get back on the winning path and what a better team to do it against.

The last time this side met, the Roar produced their best performance this season: a 5-0 whitewash against former mentor Ange Postecoglou's team. It was side of what many thought would symbolize the season: a transitional phase for the Victory and the Roar about to kick off another title defence. Ten rounds in, and its Victory who

are sitting third and are in contention for the title; while the Roar are second last.

Brisbane defender Jack Hingert admitting that the game against the Victory is essential if the Roar want to get back into finals contention.

"It's still early in the season, but week by week the finals are getting closer," said Hingert. "It's now or never. If we'd won on the weekend we'd be fourth. Two or three wins on the trot would put us back up there."

Vidosic will have the benefit of welcoming back Socceroos duo, skipper Matt Smith and right-back Ivan Franjic. While Victory boss

Ange Postecoglou will have striker Archie Thompson and Mark Milligan back on deck, after admitting last week that the lack of depth against Adelaide hurt the team in their chances.

With returning stars and both sides coming off embarrassing defeats, expect Vidosic and Postecoglou to marshal their boys for the win. Brisbane needs to get their season back on track. However, you'll hard pressed to look past a draw here.

Kiss of Death
Victory 1-1 Roar



Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theo (GK)
2. Matt Smith (capt)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Matt Jurman
5. Ivan Franjic
6. Erik Paartalu
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murodocca
10. Henrique
11. Ben Halloran
13. Yuji Takahashi
16. Do Dong-Hyun
17. Mitch Nichols
19. Jack Hingert
20. Matt Acton (GK)
21. James Meyer
22. Thomas Broich
24. Nick Fitzgerald.

three to be omitted

In: Matt Smith (returns from international duty), Ivan Franjic (returns from international duty), Nick Fitzgerald (promoted), Do Dong-Hyun (promoted)

Out: James Donachie (calf - 1 week)

Unavailable: Nil



Sydney FC Line Up

1. Ivan Necevski (gk)
2. Sebastian Ryall
3. Fabio
4. Pascal Bosschaart
6. Jason Culina
7. Brett Emerton
8. Adam Griffiths
9. Paul Reid
10. Alessandro Del Piero
12. Blake Powell
14. Mitch Mallia
17. Terry Antonis
20. Vedran Janjetovic (gk)
21. Yairo Yau
22. Ali Abbas
23. Rhyan Grant
24. Hagi Gligor

In: Alessandro Del Piero (returns from injury), Terry Antonis (returns from international duty), Brett Emerton (returns from international duty)

Out: Terry McFlynn (suspended, 1 week)

Unavailable: Nil

Sydney FC v West Sydney Wanderers

Sat Dec 15 Allianz Stadium 7:45pm

By Magnus Lewington

Sydney FC hosts their cross-town rivals the Western Sydney Wanderers this Saturday evening as the Sky Blues attempt to continue their recent improvements under new coach Frank Farina.

Conversely, the Wanderers enter this game as one of the season's dark horses, having emerged as genuine competitors under Tony Popovich despite pre-season pessimism regarding their chances as competition new boys. Considering their relative form coming into this match, it promises much in terms of both physicality and quality. With FC winning in Wellington (their least successful away fixture historically) and the Wanderers coming off a victory against the champions Brisbane Roar, the bumper crowd predicted for the second Sydney derby of the season will be hoping for an entertaining game.

The squads come into the match nearing full strength, with FC sweating on the return of marquee man Alessandro Del Piero and both teams seeing players return from the East Asia Cup Qualifiers (Brett Emerton, Terry Antonis and Aaron Mooy). Jason Culina will be given another opportunity to improve his match fitness and find his touch; while both goal scorers form last week, Rhyan Grant and Sebastian Ryall, are fit and available for Sydney. Culina stated during the week that FC still have a lot of work to do

Referee: Chris Beath



Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #SydneyDerby

Harbour City Bragging Rights Up For Grabs

The Odds

SFC 2.20
Draw 3.30
WSW 3.35

ABC Radio Coverage - Grandstand Digital Sydney & Online.

in order to stake their claim on a position higher in the table, and Farina will hope that a continuation of recent positive results will help his team coalesce into a more competitive unit. Western Sydney will hope that Shinji Ono's first goal of the season last week against the Roar will give momentum to their marquee, with consistency the name of the game as both defensively and offensively the Wanderer's remain a work in progress.

In the broader context of the league table, this fixture once again demonstrates the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the A-League competition. Where Sydney two weeks ago were firmly anchored to

the bottom of the ladder, they now sit just three points - a single win - away from their opponents Wanderer's sitting in fourth position. Farina will take heart from the way his side has bounced back from a shocking run of performances prior to Ian Crook's sacking, and will hope to push on with efforts to climb through the pack of teams currently chasing front-runners Central Coast Mariners and Adelaide United.

Considering that one of the three solitary victories that Sydney has achieved this year was over the Wanderer's at Paramatta Stadium, the Sky Blues will be confident in their ability to take all three points

from this fixture. While the Wanderer's have been particularly impressive in both picking up points and playing aggressive football in their inaugural season, they still in many spheres of the pitch (particularly attack) lack consistency.

With a group of returning players and a growing sense of confidence, Sydney has the opportunity to demonstrate their intentions to the rest of the League and further turn the corner after the slow start they have endured in the 2012-13 season. A close match, but a Sydney win at Allianz this Saturday.

Kiss of Death
Sydney 2-1 Wanderers



Wanderers Line Up

1. Ante Covic (GK)
2. Shannon Cole
3. Adam D'apuzzo
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
5. Michael Beauchamp (c)
6. Jerome Polenz
7. Labinot Haliti
8. Mateo Poljak
9. Dino Kresinger
10. Aaron Mooy
11. Tarek Elrich
12. Tahj Minniecon
13. Joey Gibbs
14. Kwabena Appiah-Kubi
15. Reece Caira
17. Youssouf Hersi
18. Iacopo La Rocca
19. Mark Bridge
20. Jerrad Tyson (GK)
21. Shinji Ono
23. Jason Trifiro

*six to be omitted

In: 7. Labinot Haliti (promoted), 10. Aaron Mooy (returns from international duty), 11. Tarek Elrich, 14. Kwabena Appiah-Kubi, 15. Reece Caira, (all promoted), 19. Mark Bridge (returns from injury)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nil



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Adelaide Utd Line Up

- 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)
- 2.Osama Malik
- 3.Nigel Boogaard
- 5.Iain Fyfe
- 6.Cassio
- 8.Marcelo Carrusca
- 10.Dario Vidosic
- 11.Bruce Djite
- 14.Cameron Watson
- 17.Iain Ramsay
- 18.Fabian Barbiero
- 20.Paul Izzo (gk)
- 21.Jeronimo Neumann
- 22.Fabio Ferreira
- 23.Evan Kostopoulos

In: Eugene Galekovic (gk) (returns from international duty)

Out: John Hall (gk) (returns to NYL)

Unavailable: Jake Barker-Daish (groin – 1 week)

Adelaide Utd v Wellington Phoenix

By Matt Mays

Adelaide United will be looking to build on that magnificent night last Friday with another home win to take them hot on Central Coast's heels – But Wellington will be no walkover.

The Reds thankfully have no new injury news, despite concerns after Vidosic limped off early in the second half. Djite will be looking to start his third consecutive game but Kosmina does have options on the bench. The likes of Van Dijk (who scored twice for the reserves on Saturday), Ramsey and Jeronimo are struggling to get into the team, but prove United have depth and healthy competition in the squad for the boss to ponder. But why fix something that's not broken?

The Reds though welcome back their star keeper Galekovic, who returns from his spell in Asia with the Socceroos. Meanwhile boss John Kosmina was thrilled at the turnout at Hindmarsh last Friday night, but stated in his post-match press conference his confusion about the consistency of the attendances this season.

“The crowd were simply amazing tonight, but where are these fans every week? We need these fans to come back. They come

Referee: Strebrel Delovski



The Odds

AUFC 1.86
Draw 3.65
Phoenix 4.50

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hash-tag #REDSvNIX

Red Hot Reds Prepare for Phoenix Flames

to watch us play soccer, so come and watch us every time.” Friday night brought the biggest attendance at Hindmarsh of the season.

“We play Wellington next week; will these fans be here for that game? We need them.” Now I don't think at all that Kosmina was being ungrateful at all, but from watching the game from the stands, seeing a packed stadium does indeed make a huge difference.

It seems Adelaide have a great team spirit in the camp at the moment, and Kosmina also stated this week that he intends

Sun Dec 16 Hindmarsh Stadium 5:00pm

to keep all of his team together, ahead of the January transfer window.

“We don't want to sell. It's not a guarantee but we are not looking to bring any players in either.” In the meantime, the Wellington Phoenix are finding it hard to maintain any kind of consistency at the moment. With no win in the last 3 and a tame defeat to the lowly Sydney, Phoenix boss Rickie Herbert will be asking his players to step it up from here on in.

He may result in fielding some young blood to the side after impressive run-outs from Louis

Fenton, Tyler Boyd and Benji Totori last week against Sydney. “The young boys added something and have thrown themselves into the mix for Adelaide away next week, and Dani Sanchez is now fit again so there is another possibility” Herbert said.

Herbert may need more than just his youngsters for this trip. The Reds are playing some decent stuff at the moment.

**Kiss of Death
Adelaide 3-1 Phoenix**



Phoenix Line Up

- 1.Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Tony Lochhead
6. Alex Smith
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Benjamin Totori
10. Stein Huysegems
11. Jeremy Brockie
12. Tyler Boyd
16. Louis Fenton
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
30. Griffin McMaster (GK)

*one to be omitted

In: Dani Sanchez (returns from injury)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite)

All-Star concept hits Australian shores

A-League Rewind



By Robert Di Fabio

It's been an exciting week for Australian football. Governing body Football Federation Australia announced the tour of English powerhouse Manchester United, where it will lock horns with the A-League All-Stars on July 20, 2013 at Sydney's ANZ Stadium. A fixture which has many waiting with a great deal of anticipation.

For the first time since 1999, football giant's Manchester United will be visiting Australia. Many fans will have fond memories of their last tour down under, when the Red Devils faced the Socceroos in a two-legged encounter, in Melbourne and Sydney.

From reports, demand has been at a premium, with thousands of tickets snapped up within minutes of opening to the general public. In many

ways, this shows the global pulling power of the 19-time English champion, and more importantly illustrates football's potential pulling power in Australia's cluttered sporting landscape.

The match will be played at the Olympic Stadium – an arena the Red Devils played the last time they toured Australia – with organisers confirming that United will be fielding its full squad in the star-studded exhibition game.

“I'm delighted that the NSW Government's agency, Destination NSW, in partnership with ANZ Stadium, has won an Australian and New Zealand exclusive to host Manchester United in NSW, the home of world class sport,” NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said.

“Manchester United is the most successful English football club in history, having won 19 Premier League titles, 11 FA Cups and three European Cups, and the match against our A-League team promises to be an exhilarating contest.

FFA CEO David Gallop also revealed that the A-League All-Stars team would be picked by the fans – a fantastic initiative, with fan engagement a key priority under Gallop's rein as

head boss.

The structure is not entirely known at present; however it is believed that fans will vote for a preliminary squad of A-League players, where a panel from the FFA will decide on a final squad.

The All-Stars concept is one which has a mass amount of potential, and will certainly be an outstanding success in Australia. The notion is derived from American sports; in football's case, the MLS All-Stars team has received a glut of worldwide media attention each year.

In 2012, the MLS All-Stars was on show for its 17th successive year, facing reigning European and FA Cup winner's Chelsea. The English side didn't field its most potent line-up; but was overhauled nonetheless by the All-Star team, losing 3-2 in a tightly fought contest.

The only downside to next year's edition will be the absence of some A-League Socceroos players, who will be on duty in South Korea, following the national team's qualification on Sunday for the AFC East Asian Cup next July – involving host's South Korea, Japan and China.

On the contrary, there will be

a raft of talented players up for selection, including some of the league's best visa players. The likes of Alessandro Del Piero, Thomas Broich, Marcos Flores, Emile Heskey, Marcelo Carrusco and Besart Berisha will all provide an enticing exhibition of football.

“It's early days but certainly the interest has been overwhelming and an annual fixture is something that clearly we'd be extremely interested in,” Gallop explained.

“In some respects it's analogous to Alessandro Del Piero, in that having Manchester United here and making it a success may well entice other overseas clubs to turn their eyes to the A-League.

“Therefore it's all blue skies ahead.”

Whatever the outcome is of this glamour friendly, it's sure to put the A-League on the world map, with millions of viewers anticipated to tune in across the globe. Well done to all parties involved, from the FFA, NSW Government, to Manchester United, for getting this innovative idea, to become a reality.

Follow Robert on Twitter @ RobertDiFabio

Hot

The news that National Technical Director Han Berger will be seeing out his FFA contract in a reduced part-time capacity is already being claimed as a victory by some detractors of the National Curriculum, who object to the overtly ‘Dutch’ flavour of the content among other things. Without proselytising the merits of the Dutch 4-3-3 philosophy/system over others, it bears keeping in mind that any mass implementation in any field of learning/education will not yield tangible results overnight or in the near future – did the current youth-development programs in Spain and Japan get reneged on after a few lousy results? NO! The implementation of football systems/philosophies etc. as nationwide curriculum takes years, up to a decade before the maximum results speak for themselves, so I sincerely hope player development in this country doesn't go back to the relative Dark Ages it started to leave behind a few years ago any time soon.

Not

In the words of that bloke from Broadmeadows on the telly, “What a huge week it's been in football!” After a shaky start against Hong Kong, Australia qualified for the 2013 East Asian Cup after a hard-fought draw with North Korea and thrashings dished out to Guam and Taiwan that brought back memories of our Oceania days when 10+ winning scores were the norm; particularly encouraging were the performances of several Socceroos young guns/debutants that should warrant consideration for future caps from Holger Osieck. On the domestic-league front, the FFA finally greenlights an A-League All-Star Game next year between Manchester United – returning to our shores for the 1st time since 1999 when they took on the Socceroos in Melbourne and Sydney – and an A-League XI. I for one think this is long overdue and to be frank, the opposition to the concept of an All-Star XI due to its rooting in American sporting culture is petty ignorance... let's be honest, if a single A-League club, be it the reigning premier or whoever, had won the privilege of playing Man U there would be opposition fans crying foul! As the saying goes, “you can't please everyone” but I, and am sure many more Oz football fans are already anticipating the prospect of seeing one of world football's key clubs taking on our domestic league's best, right here in our own backyard!

- Alvaro Rodriguez

Newcastle Jets Statement Regarding ATO Notice

The media has alerted the Hunter Sports Group that the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is taking action against the Newcastle Knights and the Newcastle Jets. “We are surprised by the move by the ATO, as we have not received notification,” a spokesperson for the Hunter Sports Group said. “We advise that any outstanding sum will be paid as soon as possible - well before the reported hearing date on the matter next February.” It is business as usual for both the Knights and the Jets. There will be no further comment.



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M A R C O S F L O R E S

9

GRAPHICS : ANITA MILAS

Boo's World

SUMMER SERIES



By Mark Boric

The Soccerroos returned to their minnow-bashing best to qualify for the Finals of the East Asian Cup. Adam Taggart became the International version of Andrew Nabbout. Nabbout showed promise in the VPL without actually setting the competition alight, but seized his A-League chance to score regularly for Victory and become a cult hero with the fans. Taggart was even less distinguished as an A-League player before grabbing two goals against

Chinese Taipei when getting his Soccerroos opportunity. Manchester United are coming to Australia next year to play an A-League All Stars team. The FFA is keen to get the All-Star concept running and you wonder how long it is before they rename the A-League the Australian MLS, as that is where they seem to be taking all their cues from. A fiery Manchester Derby saw a City club associate strike United player Rio Ferdinand with coin in the aftermath of Robin van Persie's winning goal. Wouldn't the FFV Tribunal have a field day with that? They could issue a fine which would even make the oil rich sheikh's searching for cash to pay off. Clive Palmer has moved on from wreaking havoc in football to trying destroy golf. On the eve of the Australian PGA being played at his Coolum Resort course he has placed dinosaur replicas around the course, as well as advertising for his Titanic II project which involves 61 images painted on the grass.



And then the All Stars will take on the Harlem Globetrotters...

Sounds like he's on the grass himself. Speaking of rich, or in this case, once-rich, owners it has been reported that Jets owner Nathan Tinkler has had his private plane repossessed and also will not be renewing the lease on his private box at Stadium Australia. With Emille Heskey's loss of form, he should be careful he doesn't end up in one of the Patinack Farm dispersal sales

should he continue to become a donkey. In the weekend's A-League action Victory really missed Adama Traore and Mark Millgan as they conceded four in their loss in Adelaide. Gol Gol got the goal on debut as Heart sunk Perth, with John Aloisi and Jacob Burns getting a little fired up. Central Coast Mariners keep looking good, defeating a Newcastle Jets side who have gone off the



From Skilled Park to Jurassic Park, Clive Palmer seems to be going from one sinking ship to another.

boil. But the biggest result was Sydney FC notching a first win under Frank Farina, 2-1 at Wellington Phoenix. It was away in New Zealand, so he didn't have to drive home and hopefully he was able to enjoy a celebratory glass of champagne. Back in Europe, Lionel Messi surpassed Gerd Muller's record for goals in a single year, and is now chasing down Tony Lockett, Peter Hudson and Bob Pratt.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A-League Champion 2012/13	This week	Last week
Central Coast Mariners	4.00	4.50
Adelaide United	3.50	6.00
Melbourne Victory	7.00	5.50
Wellington Phoenix	29.0	19.0
Brisbane Roar	41.0	11.0
Perth Glory	51.0	15.0
Newcastle Jets	41.0	23.0
Melbourne Heart	34.0	34.0
Sydney FC	29.0	41.0
West Sydney Wanderers	34.0	41.0

BOOTS 'N ALL



Roger Sleeman

THE TROUBLE WITH NEWCASTLE It is a harrying time for football in the Hunter with the failure of the Jets to make any impres-sion on the A-League this season.

It's unthinkable that an area with such a fantastic football tradi-tion can be in such a precarious position. If you examine the list of great local products, Artie Quill, Albert Simmons, Reg Date, the Morrow brothers, Bobby Burgoyne, Den-nis Wright, Ronnie Giles, Tom Snedden , John Doyle, Ray Baartz, Col Curran, Joe Senkalski Craig Johnston, Marshall Soper, Graham Jennings and David Lowe , it reads like a Who's Who of Australian football. Certainly, the responsibility for the lack of outstanding talent emerging can't be blamed solely at the feet of Jets coach,Gary Van Egmond, because local players like, Ben Kantarovski, Taylor Regan, James Pepper,James Vir-gilli and Connor Chapman have all been given the chance to perform at the highest level. When Van Egmond coached the club to the A-League championship in 2007/08, he had far greater tal-ent at his disposal but maybe now the A-League is a much higher standard. In Ray Baartz, the former mercu-rial Socceroo, who is the Chairman of the Advisory Board, the Jets



Jets star Michael Bridges has been used sparingly this season, much to the bemusement of many.

have a man with unquestionable quality but the question begs as to whether he has any real input into the team's operation. My gut feeling is he clearly doesn't and I know for a fact, Baartz like a lot of supporters, would like to see Michael Bridges being utilised in the Jet's plans. In his fifteen minute cameo ap-pearance last Saturday against the Mariners, Bridges contributed more than some of the players who were on the pitch for the whole game. His brilliant run off the shoulder of a defender which was incor-rectly ruled offside when he was a good chance to score, and the brilliant pass he made to the left of two defenders for Craig Goodwin to run onto and just push the ball wide of the left post, was enough to suggest he should be playing more regularly. Certainly, Baartz would also agree that Bridges would be a great foil for Emile Heskey who in the last few matches has been playing far too deep and making little impact

on proceedings. The Jets were simply outplayed by the Mariners so the time has come for Van Egmond to swallow his pride and listen to Baartz's recom-mendations. Two seasons ago, Marshall Soper was assisting the strikers at the Jets under the watchful eye of Branko Culina. Ironically, Soper was instructed to avoid press exposure but when you're as great as this man how can you prevent the press seeking your time. Baartz should be given the power to re-employ Soper and also en-gage the consulting services of his former Socceroo teammate, John Doyle, who has one of the best football minds in the country but is given little recognition despite being responsible for coaching and developing some of our best local products, including Jim Pati-kas, Joel Griffiths, Robbie Slater, Nick Carle Andrew Durante, and arguably our greatest export next to Craig Johnston, Tim Cahill. Without the intense coaching he



Dino Kresinger goes down in the box and earns the Wander-ers a very late penalty against the Roar.

received from Doyle when he returned from trials at Milwall in 1997, Cahill could never have reached the level in the game he has. Doyle's latest pearl is a Sutherland junior, Chris Ikonimides, who is currently playing for Atlanta reserves and is predicted by his mentor to reach great heights in the game. Sadly, Newcastle has deserted its past and moved in a different direction which was emphasised by the removal of one of its great-est sons, David Lowe, the former Socceroo striker, from the role of talent scout early in the season. Furthermore , it is has taken nearly thirty five years for New-castle to recognise the genius of its former hero , Ken Boden, who is guest of honour in February, 2013 at the thirty five year re-union of the Newcastle KB club's entry to the NSL. Why did Newcastle wait so long to invite him back because this gentle genius should have been demonstrating his skills to young players many years ago in the

Newcastle area? The time has now come for foot-ball in Newcastle to fulfil its true potential. SBS - LIFT YOUR GAME Due to the vast amount of football viewing on Fox Sports and Setanta, it is easy to forget that SBS, the flagbearer and pioneer of in depth football coverage in Australia, is still a vital player. However, last Monday night as I watched the World Game I was a bit concerned that the channel had dropped its game somewhat. I'm not sure whether it's a lack of preparation or the participants are not seeing the obvious. In the first half of the Wanderers v Brisbane clash, Ben Halloran penetrated the left side of the box and instead of finishing with his left side ,he hit the ball weakly across the goal with the outside of his right foot. This was totally the wrong option when a Brisbane defender was on his right side so he was obviously

obstructed from contacting the full face of the ball. No comment was made by either of the panelists, Craig Foster or David Zdrilic, on this phase of play which is highly disappointing be-cause young Halloran despite his great speed is technically deficient on his left side. The second case was when Kres-inger was grabbed by a Brisbane defender outside the box but when he was in the box there was no more contact and the Wander-ers striker just fell to the ground. Zdrilic and Foster could not decide conclusively that this should've been a free kick outside the box where the actual infringe-ment took place. There was absolutely no doubt that this was not a penalty. Of course commentators can't see everything but they should remember viewers are watching the show to hear expert analysis.

TIPPING - LUCK OR EXPER-TISE? It's not easy tipping in the A-League and its hard work to maximise your numbers. Very few people would've picked Sydney to beat Phoenix last week-end and it would've taken a brave person to fancy the Wanderers win against the Roar, even allowing for the contentious penalty awarded to the home side. Of course a good knowledge of the teams and close scrutiny of every match assists greatly in achieving high numbers. All my hard work is paying off so far with my twenty seven cor-rect predictions for the first ten rounds. There are former Soccerroos and expert journalists who are performing well below expecta-tions and I can only say to them in my humble way; the day you stop learning in this game is the time you have to reappraise your approach.



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Mariners Derby Loss Hands Victory Top Spot

By Daniel Quinn

In the latest round of the NYL the Melbourne Victory regained top spot in the NYL as the Central Coast fell to the Jets and the Melbourne Heart continued their fine recent form.

The round kicked-off on Saturday as Adelaide United thumped Perth Glory 6-2 at Burton Park. The Glory took an early lead as Ndumba Makeche tapped in after a goal mouth scramble.

But Perth didn't hold their lead for long as Awer Mabil simply finished from Liam Wooding's cutback, before Perth were reduced to ten after a deliberate handball on the goal line enabled Sergio van Dijk to slot from the spot.

On 35 minutes Wooding emphatically finished from the edge of the area from an Antony Golec cutback, before Jacob Melling converted from the spot after Daniel Bowles was tripped in the box.

Just after the break van Dijk was found at the back post before the Dutchman blasted the fifth.

Makeche completed his brace with twenty minutes left as the pacey striker round Reds' keeper John Hall before slotting into the bottom corner.

The scoring wasn't over, however, as Thomas Briscoe capped off the Victory for Adelaide with the sixth. Sydney FC and the Western Sydney Wanderers competed the first Sydney Youth Derby on Saturday evening where Sydney were victorious 3-0.

Daniel Petkovski got the scoring under way on 15 minutes sweeping home after the Wanderers failed to clear

Less than ten minutes later Alec Uroevski doubled the visitors' advantage beating a couple defenders before scoring with a lovely finish. Uroevski then put Western Sydney to bed with his second heading in at the back post from great build up



Adrian Zahra on the ball for Perth Glory. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

play by Nikola Taneski. The Newcastle Jets defeated local rivals and the table topping Central Coast Mariners 4-3 in a thrilling encounter at Hunter Stadium on Saturday evening. The Jets got off to a great start with Chris Grossman firing in from a rebound just after nine minutes, before Andrew Hoole weaved his way into the box and sneaked an effort into the bottom corner. Just after the half-hour Kale Bradbery fired in the third for the hosts from an acute angle, but the Mariners responded four minutes later with their first as Patrick Dixon rounded Jet's keeper Aleks

Vrteski before finishing. The scoring in the first-half wasn't over, though, as Bradbery neatly finished his second five minutes before the break. Central Coast started the second-half brightly and were rewarded with Michael Neill making it 4-2 from the edge of the box, before Tomislav Cirjak superbly curled a late free-kick into the net. The Melbourne Victory eased past the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) 4-0 at SS Anderson Reserve, Port Melbourne on Sunday afternoon.

The Victory raced to a three goal



Serge Van Dijk scores for Adelaide United and gives Awer Mabil a lift to boot. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

lead just after 21 minutes as Chris Cristaldo nicely finished, before Connor Pain scored twice inside two minutes poking home a low cross, before wonderfully beating three defenders and slotting past AIS'keeper Andre Jannese. Overage midfielder Spase Dilevski then thumped a Cristaldo back-heel early in the second-half, before Luke O'Dea added the fifth with the last kick of the game converting Dylan Murnane's nice cross from the left.

The Melbourne Heart edged the Brisbane Roar 3-2 at Goodwin Park on Sunday partly thanks to a Joshua Groenewald brace.

Irish defender Steven Gray opened the scoring with an emphatic header on just 13 minutes, before Groenewald tapped home his first of the afternoon. On 26 minutes Groenewald completed his brace as the Heart Skipper punished a poor Roar defensive pass and fired past Roar'keeper Fraser Chalmers. Brisbane came out after the break as a much better side with Nick Fitzgerald grabbing one back finishing off a nice slick team move. In stoppage-time Anthony Proia brilliantly made the score line 3-2 with a free-kick from the edge of the area.

Round 8 Results

Brisbane Roar 2 (Nick Fitzgerald 55, Anthony Proia 90+4)
Melbourne Heart 3 (Steve Gray 13, Joshua Groenewald 19, 26)

Melbourne Victory 5 (Cristaldo 14, Pain 19, 21, Dilevski 52, O'Dea 90+4)
Australian Institute of Sport 0

Western Sydney Wanderers 0
Sydney FC 3 (Petrovski 15', Uroevski 26', 70')

Adelaide United 6 (Mabil 8, van Dijk 20, 55, Wooding 35, Melling 45, Briscoe 85)
Perth Glory 2 (Makeche 1, 70)

Newcastle Jets 4 (Grossman '9, Hoole '20, Bradbery '31, '40)
Central Coast Mariners 3 (Dixon '35, Neill '51, Cirjak '86)

NYL Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Melbourne Victory	8	6	0	2	24	6	18	18
2 CC Mariners	8	6	0	2	17	9	8	18
3 Melbourne Heart	8	5	1	2	17	11	6	16
4 Newcastle Jets	8	5	1	2	20	15	5	16
5 Brisbane Roar	8	4	1	3	15	12	3	13
6 Adelaide United	8	3	2	3	19	14	5	11
7 Sydney FC	8	3	0	5	20	21	-1	9
8 Perth Glory	8	2	0	6	15	19	-4	9
9 WS Wanderers	8	2	3	3	10	16	-6	9
10 AIS	8	0	0	8	6	40	-34	0

Round 9 Fixtures

Saturday 15 December
Adelaide United v Newcastle Jets
Burton Park KO 11:00 AM

Saturday 15 December
Perth Glory v Western Sydney
Intiga Stadium KO 1:30 PM

Saturday 15 December
CC Mariners v Melbourne Heart
Centre of Excellence, Tuggerah KO 2:00 PM

Sunday 16 December
Melbourne Victory v Brisbane Roar
Anderson Res, Port Melb KO 3 PM

Sunday 16 December
Sydney FC v AIS
TBA KO 3:00 PM

All KO times ae AEDT



W-League Wrap



Roar Comeback Takes All The Glory

By FFA

The Westfield W-League ladder remains congested after Round 8 with another win for Canberra United ensuring six teams remain in contention for the finals.

Perth Glory remain at the summit two points clear of five teams separated by a single point, with the trio of Sydney FC, Brisbane Roar and Canberra United all sharing second.

The Glory were denied the chance to skip clear at the top as a typically resilient Brisbane Roar came back from two goals down at the interval to draw 2-2.

Katrina Gorry equalised with four minutes remaining to earn a crucial point, with the Brisbane humidity ensuring the Glory did it tough in what was their third match inside seven days.

There was also a stalemate in Melbourne as the Victory and Sydney FC continued their ever-growing rivalry.

Young gun Caitlin Foord put the Sky Blues ahead early on, only for Maika Ruyter-Hooley to soon equalise.

A high quality match continued to play out in extreme heat, although there was to be no winner.

Champions Canberra United one again showed their mettle with a second hard-fought one-goal victory of the week.

After edging out leaders Perth Glory 2-1 on Wednesday, United again found a visit to their alternate home venue at Deakin to be fruitful.

The two teams were separated only by a superb Nicole Sykes first-half winner, her maiden



Steph Catley (Victory) is forced to do some hurdling as Sydney keeper Shamiran Khamis claims the ball. Elizabeth Ralston follows up. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Westfield W-League goal.

Despite chances at both ends, Newcastle Jets, hamstrung by the dismissal of star midfielder Emily Van Egmond for a second cautionable offence, could find no way back.

Western Sydney Wanderers were rarely troubled in overpowering bottom side Adelaide United hitting four unanswered goals.

Louise Fors and Sarah Walsh hit the back of the net inside the opening ten minutes with Servet Uzunlar extending the advantage, before Fors bagged her second after the hour mark.

It was the biggest win in the club's short life, and leaves them sitting alongside Melbourne Victory, a point off second.



Katrina Gorry (Roar) and Elisa D'Ovidio compete for the ball. Photo: KEIGH EIGELAND



Roar celebrate their Katrina Gorry's late equaliser. Photo: KEITH EIGELAND

Round 8 Results

Melbourne Victory 1 (Ruyter-Hooley 27)
Sydney FC 1 (Foord 4)

Canberra United 1 (Nicole Sykes 34')
Newcastle Jets 0

Western Sydney Wanderers 4 (Louise Fors 6', 67', Sarah Walsh 8', Servet Uzunlar 40')
Adelaide United 0

Western Sydney Wanderers 4 (Louise Fors 6', 67', Sarah Walsh 8', Servet Uzunlar 40')
Adelaide United 0

Brisbane Roar 2 (Tameka Butt 61, Katrina Gorry 87)
Perth Glory 2 (Kathryn Gill 34, Marianna Tabain 44)

W-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Perth Glory	8	5	1	2	19	9	10	16
2 Sydney FC	8	4	2	2	18	13	5	14
3 Canberra United	8	4	2	2	15	10	5	14
4 Brisbane Roar	8	4	2	2	13	11	2	14
5 Melbourne Victory	8	4	1	3	14	8	6	13
6 WS Wanderers	8	4	1	3	15	10	5	13
7 Newcastle Jets	8	1	1	6	10	22	-12	4
8 Adelaide United	8	1	0	7	6	27	-21	3

Round 9 Fixtures

Sat 15 Dec KO 2:00pm
Canberra United Vs Melbourne Victory
McKellar Park, Canberra

Sat 15 Dec KO 4:00pm
Adelaide United Vs Newcastle Jets
Burton Park

Sat 15 Dec KO 5:00pm
Sydney FC Vs Perth Glory
Allianz Stadium

Sun 16 Dec KO 3:00pm
Western Sydney Wanderers FC Vs Brisbane Roar FC
Campbelltown Stadium

All KO times ae AEDT

When A Dream Suddenly Turns Into A Nightmare

Believe it or not, the previous week marked the passing anniversary of THAT 1997 World Cup qualifier between Australia and Iran. Ashley Reid from SoccerooReal.com relives the fateful night that unfolded at the MCG.

Fifteen years on, and Australia is on the brink of playing in its third World Cup. It's a stark contrast to the days of Oceania when Australia's World Cup prospects were almost so forlorn that most fans did not dare dream.

After emerging as Oceania's winners, Australia would be shunted to all parts of the globe and made to play sudden-death playoffs against battle-hardened losers from other confederations as our first and final hope of qualifying - and that was typically after an earlier, slightly less daunting playoff. For the 1998 World Cup, this treacherous path seemed not so bad when Australia was finally given its wish of going through Asia by needing to beat Asian's 4th best team. Comparing that to Scotland, Israel then Colombia and Canada then Argentina, the dreaming could really start.

As it is now known, that seemingly easier path proved a fool's gold. It was not the challenge of Iran that undid Australia, it was the nature of the fixture. Football's magic is because it's so uncertain, and in a sudden-death game, that uncertainty can be cataclysmic. Add to that FIFA's absurd away-goals rule that magnifies the impact of a goal far beyond its norm and inhibits a home team from attacking too much, then you have even greater recipe for chaos.

The Iran Game proved a watershed moment for the sport. With such a strong spectre of qualifying, the mainstream media was heavily focused. The sport had seen nothing like it and appeared to really come of age. More importantly, it would convert a mass of people to the magic that only this sport can provide. Little were to learn that that magic cuts both ways, leaving Australia disappointed, and ironically making qualification through Asia and the playoffs after two further attempts, far more appreciated. Pivotal to the SoccerooReal.com website, it was its birth. So much so that eventually there were 5 parts spanning 3 years dedicated to this one night. Now there'll be six.

Those parts to the Iran Game can still be viewed in the "Action" section in their exact original wording. They've never be revisited for corrections, punctuation and even writing style. In fifteen years, so much as changed there too.

The intent of the Socceroo Realm was only ever for personal recount, even for carthisis and self-healing. Longer term, it would serve primarily as a journal and for enjoyment of writing. It evolved to providing general news, until now that is solely analysis and opinion. The early and mid-2000s was its peak in terms of traffic and communication, until the proliferation of mainstream websites like theworldgame, Fox Sports, newspapers and even A-League clubs - all with so many pages that have seen the Socceroo Realm hammered from its permanent top 10 in Google and Alta Vista (of the time) in searches for "Socceroos". A search just now sees it nowhere on the first 10 pages. Being slow to get onto twitter and facebook hasn't helped. Still, there's a dedicated readership, and that's forever appreciated.

That's the Socceroo Realm, now to the Iran Game. For something different I'll present a chronological list of memories that are still vivid and often recounted either in whimsical thinking or discussing with friends.

* When first asked about the match at the MCG, Robbie Slater called it "a joke". The main concern was the cricket pitch; there were no drop-in pitches back then as now. Many players, and fans, had that concern. A minor concern was actually getting the crowd, considering soccer



The Socceroos of 1997 with Terry 'El Tel' Venables at the helm.

was very much a minor sport. Did Soccer Australia exaggerate the potential? Prices were reasonable at \$40, \$60 and \$80-100 for bronze, silver and gold, respectively.

* With preparations under way and cricket pitch getting plenty of water, Paul Trimboli - as a local Socceroo - gave it a thumbs up in a TV news report.

* Ticket purchase. A friend and I went to Chadstone Shopping Centre to purchase them. We were happy with silver and picked out seats in something like Q61. It was next to the penalty box to the city end, in the Southern Stand.

* Australia were to play either Iran or Japan and neither of those teams relished that chance. They played a cut-throat play-off in Malaysia (Johor Bahru to be precise) that Japan eventually won 3-2 in extra time. Australia was straight off to Teheran.

* Before the identity of the fourth-placed Asian team was known, it had already been announced that Australia would play at home last. This was greeted as a great advantage. First, the axiom that knowing the outcome required, the team could play accordingly and be more in control of achieving the result. Second, and more importantly, was the travel. While Japan appeared the lesser challenge and more comfortable logistically, it was now seen as more desirable to play Iran. They were now forced to fly all the way back to Iran, play a match, then fly to Australia. Surely fatigue would be a big problem. They had also crumbled in their group stage when, as group leaders, lost two and drew one of their last three games. Then lost to Japan in the play-off. They appeared demoralised.

* The first leg in Teheran didn't go as hoped. Deep down the consensus that this was Australia's big chance and that they'd be too superior was initially validated when Harry Kewell scored early. From then on, it was an unnerving struggle. In fact, Iran quite easily could have won and seemed energised and reassured by returning straight to the comfort of home. Would it have been better that they came to Melbourne first and been hammered? Two friends visited my house to watch. They had never met before.

* With the squad now in Melbourne, all players gave approval to the MCG field, several being surprised it was good, including Slater.

* To confirm the huge mainstream interest in this game, at a team photograph, one of the players remarked "ooh, sponsors!". It might have been a Toyota sign resting in front of them.

* With Australia only needing nil-nil to qualify, confidence was high. Knowing this, would the team play accordingly? The consensus seemed not to play for the draw, especially when at home. Personally, I felt reality would set in, and the result would be eeked out, either 0-0 or 1-0.

* Game day was spent at home and

imagining the prospect of qualifying for an actual World Cup. Wow. Some of the trepidation from the game in Iran had alleviated. The feeling was that Australia really had no excuse. I had my Socceroos shirt on, circa 1993 that Australia wore against Canada and Argentina, being the moment the sport captured me.

* I met friends at the ground almost 2 hours prior, the two who watched the first leg, and some friends of each of those who were all friends of mine. What a day for such a group of 6 to first form a bond.

* The atmosphere in the ground at this early stage was amazing. A sizeable group of Iranian fans were there trying to compete with Australian fans. Intermittently, the Australians would have enough and totally drown out the Iranians. Then the vibrant normality would restore.

* As someone that doesn't much like the national anthem, Jane Scali gave an amazing rendition. To this day, it's the best ever. Whether it was the crowd and the occasion that helped, it also affected her as there was a distinct energy flow between crowd and singer that just intensified as the anthem progressed. One friend, of Greek origin, sang in full gusto. I didn't bother, preferring to soak in the occasion.

* Early stages of the game were marked by Robbie Slater steaming down the wing, Aurelio Vidmar missing chances, Craig Moore missing a great chance from a corner, Ned Zelic shooting from range, and an Iranian playing tripping over the ball. It all seemed in control. Iran only providing one moment of anxiety, and that foray on goal was easily snuffed.

* Finally, the goal came, and it was Harry Kewell. It took some time to confirm this given the distance from goal and the general scramble. All I saw was Alex Tobin rush in and presumed he scored. The crowd went nuts as Tobin carried the ball back above his head. It was more a relief than anything.

* At half time one of the friends that watched the first leg asked about the match, and I said "Iran won't score". He said, "So we're through". I said "No". That's obviously so illogical given that Australia was leading the tie. The answer reflected the huge trepidation still ahead.

* The most poignant analysis in discussion about the game at half time was that if Australia scores again, they must score another quickly. Because given the away-goals rule after the 1-1 result in Tehran, the second goal is largely meaningless. Iran already needed to score 2 goals at 1-0 down. At 2-0 down, they still only needed 2 goals. Only their urgency would change.

* Early in the second half, Aurelio Vidmar finally scores his goal, a tap-in after a header by Craig Foster that rebounded off the crossbar. During this scrimmage, a the other friend that watched the first leg grabbed my hand in support! As the crowd went nuts, I just stayed calm and yelled out "We need one more, we need one more".

* Next thing you know, there's a



Leading 2-0 and fans were already making plans for Paris.

stoppage after an idiot invades the pitch and pulls part of the goal-net down. I felt this was good because it gave the team a chance to relax and consider the match situation after the goal. The job was by no means done. Johnny Warren also said as much in the TV telecast. By the end of the game, and media the next day, that sentiment had swung that most pundits began to blame the invader. Nonsense.

* Iran noticeably lifted their urgency. A few moments of danger seemed to be snuffed easily, providing some comfort. Of discomfort, Australia were tiring and looking unlikely to add to their score.

* Iran's first goal was only mildly discomforting, mostly because it came from a scrimmage so it seemed they got lucky. We just knew now that the match would not enter extra time.

* Iran's second goal will live long. First, there were nuggets in defence with their arms raised trying to claim offside. Second, Mark Bosnich was easily beaten. It all happened so quickly. Khodadad Azizi ran off towards the Iranian supporters. I might have said "oh shit". Mostly I remained calm knowing that there was plenty of time left - at least 15 minutes.

* As time passed, it never really looked likely. Coach Terry Venables seemed not to be making any changes, or making strange ones. Like, why was it Tony Vidmar on for Steve Horvat? Ernie Tapai was also waiting.

* Graham Arnold came on late and was passionate in trying to give the team a gee-up. Did he recognise their forlorn attitude? Arnold had the best chance, a scurried shot that went straight to the goalie through a crowd of players.

* Final whistle and Stan Lazaridis is on the ground. He'd be there for at least 10 minutes before security would remove him.

* Queen's "We are the champions" rang around the ground. For such a triumphal song, it's one that forever will mean sad times.

* I finally sat down, raised knees onto the seat in front, buried my head in them, cried. After about 5 minutes, the same friend that grabbed by hand, patted me on the head to console me. Not long after that we left. We left like zombies. It was so surreal. Few people spoke.

* We ended up a pool house in Port



A baby-faced Harry Kewell can't believe what just happened.

Melbourne where the friend with whom I was discussing at half-time got so trashed that he was locked in the toilet for ages puking up. I didn't get too carried away.

* That night I cried before bed. In the morning, one more time. I called in sick for work, too emotionally wrecked.

* On the news that morning was part of the press conference. Soccer Australia chief David Hill said Australia "gave it one hell of a lick", and words tantamount to that anyone not converted to the sport by the drama that night never will.

* Terry Venables blamed the static defence, that he always instructs the players to be moving forward or back. It seemed Tobin and Horvat were doing that, except not in unison, and in opposite directions to one another.

* A few weeks later, a cricket match is on TV, and still eerily remained a hint of the centre circle across the middle of the pitch. That was the last tangible connection to this day.

Regrets

Only one. Australia never played Iran again, even now that they are in Asia. Through Asian Cup qualifiers, Asian Cup, the 2006 World Cup and four World Cup qualifying pools, Australia has avoided Iran. Not even an international friendly could be fashioned. With only Kewell remaining from the field players that day, the time for a "re-match" has long passed.

What really went wrong?

Isolating it to events that can be controlled, two grave errors:

1) Terry Venables replaced Milan Ivanovic with Steven Horvat as sweeper for this tie. The result of which saw all three of Iran's goals caused by defensive calamity, mostly at the hands at Horvat. While Tobin was the nugget trying to run Iran offside, he should never have been in such authority. It was Ivanovic's job and Horvat was out of position. Aurelio Vidmar also said, in the SBS "After The Mourning After" documentary, that Australia would have qualified if Ivanovic was playing. To make matters worse, Horvat was one of many players starting that were returning from injury or not playing with their clubs. Aurelio was another, hence his rust in front of goal, and Ned

Zelic might have been another. You can get away with that further up the field, especially if lacking other options. You can't in defence.

2) Dreadful tactics. Australia was already losing impetus to score the third goal, so the decision much earlier should have made to close the game down. Venables only began making the move at 2-1, and before Tony Vidmar could be brought on, it was 2-2. Bizarrely, Vidmar still came on when strikers were needed.

Legacy

Two-nil ahead suddenly became a dangerous score. It's nonsense because in most games if a team reaches 2-2, it's a draw, or it might go to extra time and then a shootout. In this game, it was a win, because the second goal that Australia scored was meaningless. So 2-0 is only a dangerous score for a home-team in a two-leg playoff that finished 1-1 in the first leg. Since the Iran Game, Australia has not played such a dangerous game since.

Three years after the Iran Game, SBS showed a documentary called "After The Mourning After". It was a retrospective of the match, mostly through interviews with players. The two most notable quotes were Robbie Slater seeing "some nugget" with his hands up when describing Iran's second goal and seeing "some nugget", and Craig Foster admitting at 2-0 that his mind wandered and was dreaming of France.

That nugget was Alex Tobin. Ironic that Fox Sports' A-League Player of the Year award is called The Alex Tobin Medal. Should it be the Nugget Award? "Nugget" has entered the parlance of myself and friends when describing erroneous defending. "Doing a Foster" has not entered the parlance for teams that concede 2 goal leads and lose through poor concentration. Not yet, anyway.

The biggest legacy, of course, is "The Iran Game". It's almost a trademark now, and very much part of the Australian lexicon.

What happened next?

Australia somehow picked themselves up to perform well at the Confederations Cup held in Saudi Arabia the following month. It was supposed to be the start of their World Cup preparations but they beat Mexico and drew with Brazil in the group stage and then downed Uruguay in the semi-final. A 6-0 thrashing at the hands of the Brazilians - hat-tricks from Ronaldo and Romario - was a disappointing end to a year that was so close to being great. The team missed out on the 2002 World Cup in a play-off to Uruguay but got their revenge on the South Americans in 2005 to qualify for Germany. Then came that game against Japan. Iran, meanwhile, eventually returned home and had an enjoyable time in France, famously defeating the United States 2-1. The team fell at the first hurdle but had to wait until 2006 to return to the World Cup after missing out on 2002 in traumatic circumstances after a defeat in Bahrain. - Ed.

Andrew Zinni: Fast Paced Clinical Finisher

Blast From The Past



By Roy Hay

Andrea (Andrew) Zinni was an exciting attacker for the Socceroos, Victoria and Brunswick Juventus and Preston Makedonia in the National Soccer League in the 1980s and 1990s. He was born on 6 March 1965 and came up through the youth teams at Brunswick Juventus. Tony Boggi gave him his first senior start in 1982 against Albion Rovers in May and he scored two goals in his second full game against Frankston in a three-nil win at Olympic Park. Boggi nursed the youngster through the rest of that year mainly as a substitute when he could use his pace when the heat had gone out of the game. Zinni was among a precocious group at Juventus that included Paul Wade, Fabio Incantalupo and Micky Petersen.

In 1984 Juventus joined the National Soccer League with Zinni a regular in the team. The following year Juventus finished second to South Melbourne Hellas in the Southern Conference of the NSL but went on to win the national championship beating Sydney City Hakoah two-nil in the two-leg Grand Final. Zinni missed those games, but scored in the qualifying final and contributed throughout the season under coach John Margaritis.

Tim White called Zinni up for Victoria against Northern New South Wales in April

1984 but according to John Punshon's data Victoria did not play another game until 1988, when Zinni was also selected against Dinamo Zagreb. In 1989 he played for Victoria against PAOK from Greece. (Some later Victorian line-ups are incomplete). Andrew Zinni received his first Australian cap from Frank Arok in 1986 against New Zealand and scored his first international goal against the All Whites in his second match four minutes after coming on as a 70th minute substitute. In 1990 he helped the Socceroos win the Independence Cup in Indonesia, scoring a hat-trick against Indonesia's B team along the way. There is a hilarious description of the final in Paul Wade's autobiography, where he recounts receiving the prize money for the tournament (\$25,000US in hundred dollar bills) in an envelope after the match. The honest Wade gave the money to Vito Cilauro and the players never received any of it as a bonus! Zinni went on to receive ten full caps for Australia scoring three goals and played in a total of 17 matches for his country with six goals.

In 1986 Juventus finished on top of the Southern Conference and Andrew Zinni was top scorer in the league with eleven goals. Juventus went out in the Preliminary final to JUST. From then on Juventus went downhill and was relegated at the end of the 1988 season. In six years with the club Zinni played 138 games and scored 44 goals. Zinni transferred to Preston Makedonia and helped his new team reach the play-offs in fifth position, but Melbourne Croatia ended his season in the Elimination final. He continued with Preston racking up 111 games and 20 goals until



Andrew Zinni (left) gets his shot away despite the attentions of Wally Savor. Photo: Les Shorrock. Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Andrew Zinni celebrates one of his hat-trick of goals for Brunswick-Juventus against South Melbourne in Rd 22 of NSL 1986. Peter Laumets is not happy his defenders. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Andrew Zinni wins a close one against Gary Van Egmond in the Half-time Sprint at the 1987 Beach Fashions (NSL) Cup. Photo: John Punshon

they too were relegated at the end of the 1992-93 season.

After a short stint with Bulleen in the Victorian Premier League, Andrew Zinni returned to Brunswick for 1993-94 season playing in 22 games and scoring five times. Rebadged as Melbourne Zebras in 1994-95

the club struggled through the season as Zinni added a further 19 games and seven goals to his impressive record. But it was not enough to save the Zebras from relegation and Zinni continued in 1996 with the club in the VPL under Kenny Murphy. His talent and commitment

showed as he scored 14 goals in his 16 games for the club, including a hat-trick in a four-nil defeat of Box Hill Inter in June.

Andrew Zinni was a spotless room-mate according to Paul Wade and he was always immaculately turned out as a player. He took his game se-

riously and prepared accordingly. He and Ernie Tapai were the fastest attackers of their generation for Victoria and Australia and he leaves a legacy as one of the best players of his era. He is still contributing to the game, most recently as guest speaker at the FFV President's lunch.

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Planet Football

Honduras



By Alvaro Rodriguez

NAME: Honduras
CAPITAL: Tegucigalpa
POPULATION: (2010 approx.) 8,249,574
CONFEDERATION: CONCACAF
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: Copa America bronze-medalists 2001; CONCACAF Gold Cup winners 1981, runners-up 1985, 1991; UNCAF/Central American Cup winners 1993, 1995, 2011, runners-up 2005
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 56th
WORLD CUP APPEARANCES: 1982, 2010

WHO ARE YA?

The Republic of Honduras (literally 'depths' in Spanish) is situated in the centremost point of Central America, bordered by Guatemala, the Caribbean Ocean (the country also possesses a tiny Pacific coastline), El Salvador and Nicaragua. Before the arrival of the Spanish in the early 1500s, what is now Honduras was inhabited by the Ch'orti' Maya Indians, related to the Maya clans to the west (southern Mexico and so on); in 1502 Christopher Columbus, on his last voyage to the New World, landed on the modern-day Bay Islands east of the country, however it wasn't until 1524 that the Spanish conquistadors led by the famed conqueror of the Aztecs in Mexico, Hernán Cortés, claimed the territory for Spain despite stiff resistance from the indigenous populace. The territory was duly incorporated into



Honduran goal machine David Suazo in his Inter Milan days.



El Salvador defeats Honduras in 1969



Just in case the GPS isn't working...

the Captaincy-General of Guatemala within the wider 'Viceroyalty of New Spain' dominion. The society the Spaniards set up here was an amalgam of their own and those elements of the indigenous deemed compatible, following the example of their peers throughout the Americas. Honduras and its fellow Central American states proclaimed independence from the Spanish Crown on September 15th, 1821 after three centuries of colonial rule, but then were immediately annexed by the recently-proclaimed Mexican Empire. Having then fought off the Mexicans, the Central American states of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica merged to form the Central American Confederation, a republic that eventually dissolved in 1840 despite the efforts of its Honduran-born president Francisco Morazán to preserve the union; to this day he remains a revered figure in Honduras and El Salvador.

As was the case with its neighbouring countries, the sovereign Honduras that rose from the ashes of the Confederation was an autocratic 'banana republic' whose wealthy elite politically and economically oppressed the poor and middle-class, a state of affairs justified throughout most of the 20th

Century as protecting the country from 'Communist interests'. It was the delicate economic-trade situation in Honduras and neighbouring El Salvador that was the main catalyst for the 1969 'Soccer War' fought between the two countries just after Honduras' World Cup qualifying elimination by El Salvador. Honduras returned to civilian rule in 1979, ironically just as El Salvador's brutal 12-year civil war kickstarted, although Honduras would play a staging role in the American CIA's war against the Communist Sandinista government of Nicaragua during the '80s.

Despite suffering heavily as a result of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the 2009 constitutional crisis that resulted in the ouster of President Manuel Zelaya, Honduras has managed a semblance of political stability despite the great socio-economic inequalities plaguing it that are endemic in its neighbours as well.

SO WHAT YOU DONE?

Honduras is as football-mad as any country in the region (barring baseball-obsessed Nicaragua); its national team's fortunes are everything to the average red-blooded Honduran bloke! However the country has had a somewhat patchy international record

throughout the ages, a regional Central American powerhouse forever lapping at the heels of continental big-boys Mexico and the US. Despite its feared status within Central American football, Honduras has only won the continental Gold Cup once and been a losing finalist twice, although it has the distinction of being a CONCACAF-invitational side to acquit itself well in the CONMEBOL region's Copa America where they won bronze in 2001.

The 1969 Soccer War might well have forever defined Honduran football if not for its eventual success in qualifying for the World Cup in 1982 alongside its old rival El Salvador. Drawn in Group 5 against hosts and old colonial masters Spain, Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland, the Hondurans caused a shock by drawing 1-1 against the Spaniards and then repeating the dose (same margin too) against the Ulstermen before a credible 1-0 loss to the Yugoslavs proved Honduras' undoing. Despite finishing last in their group, the Hondurans nonetheless had given a good account of themselves, hinting perhaps at a quick return to the big stage for Mexico '86 - sadly for them they lost out to debutants Canada, and it wouldn't be until South Africa

2010 that they would return to the big dance, where they finished last with a single draw against Switzerland to their name. Nonetheless, their semi-final appearance in the following year's CONCACAF Gold Cup would have proved some consolation, adding to their UNCAF Cup victory by which they secured Gold Cup qualification.

BIG CLUBS

The country's premier club is Club Deportivo Olimpia, winner of a whopping 25 Honduran league titles, twice winner and runner-up of the CONCACAF Champions' Cup (now League) and twice played as a losing finalist in the now-discontinued Interamerican Cup between CONCACAF and CONMEBOL's club champions. The country's other powerhouses are Motagua, Real España and Marathón - between them these three have won 30 titles, which serves to highlight the extent of Olimpia's domestic dominance.

REP YOUR COLORS

Nicknamed La H 'The Big H' (although neighbouring countries' fans call them Los Catrachos, a jocular term for Hondurans in general), the Honduran NT wears the royal-blue and white of neigh-

bouring El Salvador and Nicaragua, albeit traditionally in a blue/white/blue template as opposed to its western neighbour's all-blue with white trims; in recent times the all-white away strip has taken the place of the home strip, the blue now being the away.

As for the clubs, Olimpia wears all-white with celeste trims (rather like El Salvador's Alianza), its away substitutes white for black; Motagua wear navy-blue with gold trims and a hooped celeste/navy-blue away strip; Marathón wear a green/white/red template akin to the Mexican NT and an all-black away strip, whilst Real España wear yellow (at times gold) and black vertical stripes, black shorts and socks, like the kit of Uruguay - a powerhouse Peñarol.

MATCHWINNERS

Striker David Suazo is the country's greatest-ever player by virtue of the lofty heights he reached in his club career in the late Noughties - a youth product of Marathón, he was signed by Olimpia where he managed 10 games and 5 goals over 3 years. Despite that paltry return, he was nonetheless snapped up by Serie A Cagliari before signing with Inter Milan in 2007, becoming an integral part of the team for a time and threatening to be one of the next big things in world football, but alas it was not to last. Other current Honduran internationals with vast overseas experience include Maynor Figueroa, Wilson Palacios and Roger Espinoza.

SO WHAT NOW?

The Big H have qualified for the final-round Hexagonal phase of CONCACAF's WC qualifiers, with hopes fairly high that they can reach Brazil 2014 and in so doing make history by qualifying for consecutive World Cups for the first time - but with the US and Mexico forever on the prowl, the Hondurans will find it anything but easy.

All Nations Cup 2012



Goran Zoric (Serbia) goes down after trying to force his way through the Chilean defence, Alex Rojas is about to tidy up. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

It's a Scotland v Serbia Final!

By Norm Edgar

The semi-finals of the 2012 All Nations Tournament last Sunday brought together Scotland against Ireland and Serbia played Chile in what was an enjoyable afternoon of the world game. The playing conditions only being affected by a fairly strong wind favouring the High Street Road goal.

In what proved to be a classic encounter in the British way also had seven bookings and one send off. In a game that

could have gone either way Scotland got away to good lead, Ireland fought back but then Scotland managed to get what proved to be the winner.

Scotland got away to a great start when Luke Sherbon gave them the lead after ten minutes and Dan Sweeney consolidated their position in the 30th minute with the second goal.

But in the classic never-say-die British (or is that Celtic) way Ireland came out in the second half and got right back into the game. Ireland had much more of the play and after a period

during which Ireland dominated with Simon Kelly and Alan Kearney showing out, Simon Kelly got them back into the game when he scored in the 59th minute. Ireland continued to probe and Kelly got the equaliser in the 66th minute when he headed in a cross to set up what was an exciting last twenty minutes. All the goals to this stage had been scored against the wind.

Both teams had chances to take the lead until Dan Sweeney got the ball twenty-five metres from goal on the right and scored in the 77th minute with a great left



Ray Lally (Ireland) boots the ball away from Luke Sherbon (Scotland). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

foot shot into the top left had corner that the goalie could do nothing about.

Scotland then had Zoran Petrevski sent off for an altercation in the Ireland penalty area in the 85th minute but then could have finally settled the game when Dan Sweeney found himself with only the goalie to beat but Nick Abougelis saved well.

Ireland with the advantage of the extra man kept pushing forward but Scotland managed to play out time to win 3-2

In the other semi-final Serbia playing against the wind took their chances and raced to a 3-0 lead. The first goal was a great shot from twenty-five metres

from Nemanja Lojanica which hit the back of the net like a rocket and left Chris Petropoulos in the Chile goal grasping thin air. Well worked team goals from Milos Lujic in the 37th minute after receiving the ball from Nemanja Vucic and Velibor Mitrovic in the 41st minute gave Serbia the 3-0 lead. Chile hit back straight away just on the stroke of half time when Darryl Roach got in behind the Serbian defence on the left of the penalty area to hit a great shot inside the far post past goalkeeper Branislav Karaga.

Chile could make no impression on the scoreboard in the second half despite the efforts

of Darryl Roach up forward, Andy Jerez in midfield and Alex Rojas. Serbia with Goran Zoric prominent extended their lead in the 77th minute when Nemanja Lojanica scored his second goal to give Serbia a 4-1 lead which they held till the final whistle.

The final next Sunday at 2pm should prove to be a good contest between Scotland and Serbia with Frank McGrellis coaching Scotland and Lobo Milojevic in charge for Serbia.

The final between Scotland and Serbia will be played at the earlier time of 2pm on Sunday 16th December at the Knox Regional Football Centre.

SAO PAULO CLINCH COPA SUDAMERICANA



Latin Wrap

By Francis Fields

Argentinian side Tigre decided to abandon the second half after a brawl at half time in the second leg final to award Sao Paulo the 2012 title.

Lucas Moura was the talk of the town in a very colourful reception at the Morumbi stadium.

Scores remained 0-0 as the young midfielder was farewelled in style in front of home fans. Lucas is off to Paris St Germain but not before opening the scoring in the Copa Sudamericana final second leg.

Oswaldo put the second six minutes later with daft, comfortable chip to sink Tigre after 30 minutes of play.

Referee Enrique Osses had to restrain players after a melee got out of control at half time and incidents at the players' tunnel.

It was a frustrating Tigre side in the first half and as two players, Gastón Díaz and Paulo Miranda from the home side got their marching orders during the brawl. Assistant referee Julio Bascuñán announced the game was to be finished at half time, in extraordinary circumstances as Sao Paulo were crowned champions.

Generally speaking, it was a disappointing affair in what South American football can expose, as Tigre decided to only play 45 minutes, with the unfortunate circumstances.

Next year Sao Paulo will defend its crown and also qualify to the next edition of the Copa Libertadores.

There are speculation of Tigre abandoning amidst threats at gun-point and players bearing scars of bruises and cuts from the all-in brawl.

A sorry way to end the continental championship season. What happened on the pitch is rightfully theirs, for Sao Paulo that is, what happened off it for football's sake, should not with only 18 months until the World Cup to be staged.

BOCA SACKS COACH
Julio Falcioni's tenure at Boca Juniors is over after club president Daniel Angelici said Monday the coach's contract will not be renewed.

Falcioni was hired two years ago and brought Boca a league title, as well as steering the famous Buenos Aires club to the finals of last season's Copa Libertadores, Latin America's most important club tournament.

Angelici said his decision not to renew Falcioni's contract was influenced on Saturday when Boca fans, despite a 2-1 victory over Godoy Cruz, jeered Falcioni with dozens of handmade signs call on him to quit.

"What happened made us reflect," Angelici told reporters.

Boca finished in sixth place in the just-completed Inicial tournament, the first half of Argentina's split season. Velez Sarsfield won the



An unlikely champion in Huachipato lifting the Chilean Clausura title.

title with 41 points. Boca finished eight points behind and was in contention until the last two rounds of the season.

Despite his success, Falcioni was never a favorite of Boca fans who disliked his more conservative style of play. Former Boca coach Carlos Bianchi and former Boca player Rodolfo Arruabarrena are reported as the top two candidates to replace Falcioni.

River Plate has a new coach in Ramón Díaz going into the second half of the season, while Argentina's other famous club in Boca Juniors may also be on the verge of making a coaching change.

Boca coach Julio Falcioni was booted off the pitch in his team's 2-1 victory over Godoy Cruz in the final round of the first half of the Argentine split season, called the Inicial tournament.

The deafening disapproval at Boca's La Bombonera stadium came just a few days after Falcioni met with club president Daniel Angelici and had reportedly agreed to stay on for another year.

Manuel Lanzini and Carlos Sánchez scored for River. It was a good start for Díaz, who won seven trophies in two coaching stints at River Plate more than a decade ago — five league titles, the Copa Libertadores and the South American Supercup.

Osmar Ferreyra and Ernesto Farias found the net for Independiente, and Emanuel Gigliotti scored twice for Colon. Most of the drama in the first division ended last weekend when Velez Sarsfield wrapped up the title — its third in eight seasons.

That put the focus on Boca and Falcioni. Falcioni, who has won a league title with Boca and took the team to the final of last season's Copa Libertadores, was the least popular person on the field on Saturday. Former Boca star Martin Palermo, now the coach of Godoy Cruz, received warm applause.

So did Juan Román Riquelme, the moody midfielder who left Boca after last season following a falling

out with Falcioni. It also marked the final match at Boca for defender Rolando Schiavi, who is expected to move next season to become an assistant coach to Palermo.

Schiavi is also reported to be interested in a move to China. Schiavi broke down crying on the pitch, reading signs like: "For leaving everything on the field, thank you." "Eternally Grateful," read another. Falcioni was greeted with several signs that read "Good Bye Falcioni, Come Back Román."

"A headline in Sunday's La Nación summed up Falcioni's position: "On the Ropes." Carlos Bianchi, who has coached Boca in two previous stints, is reportedly in line to replace Falcioni. Velez finished with 41 points in 19 games, five ahead of Newell's and Belgrano, and seven in front of Lanus.

Also last Saturday, it was: Argentinos Juniors 1, Newell's Old Boys 3; Atletico Rafaela 0, Velez Sarsfield 3; Belgrano 1, Estudiantes 0; and Lanus 0, San Lorenzo 0.



ROBINHO TEMPTED FOR RETURN
Brazil's top football club Santos has made an offer for AC Milan winger Robinho. Santos revealed Tuesday night that they are interested in getting the Brazilian star back home.

Reports in Brazil have strongly linked the 28-year-old with a return to his former club in the January transfer window and Santos president Luis Alvaro Ribeiro said the

move could be confirmed within days. "Robinho is very keen to return to Brazil and that means coming back to Santos," Ribeiro told TV O Povo.

"We have presented a written offer, though there is a difference between what the player and the club are asking for. It is not an easy negotiation process, but we will know the outcome next week."

Robinho helped Santos win the 2002 Brazilian championship with an impressive debut season as an 18-year-old. He played a leading role in the club's 2004 Brazilian championship success before being sold to Real Madrid in 2005.

NEW CHILEAN CHAMPIONS
Huachipato won the Clausura final for the first time in 38 years after a dramatic second leg went all the way to a penalty shootout where they defeated Unión Española.

Huachipato won the second leg 3-1 to bring the score to 4-4 on aggregate and took the tie to a tense penalty shootout which they won 3-2.

Despite falling behind in the first half hour of the match, Huachipato rallied from behind against an Española team that disappointingly offered very little going forward in the second half, equalling Española's first leg win before going on to clinch the title in the shootout. The match started in a bright, end-to-end way and both teams created chances in the early stages.

Huachipato's Braian Rodríguez had the best of them, heading onto the cross bar before Emilio Hernández dallied on the ball in the penalty area and got crowded out when trying to get his shot away. With Huachipato in search of the equalizer Española took a seemingly significant lead on the night taking the aggregate score to 4-1.

Unión Española players broke after dispossessing Huachipato, and Dagoberto Currumilla lashed a left-footed show across Nery Veloso in goal and into the back of the net. Now 4-1 down on aggregate,

Huachipato could have limped out of the final but instead kicked into gear and started to work themselves back in the match.

Daniel González provided the much need spark for Huachipato, scoring two exceptional goals before halftime to reel the score back to 2-1 on the night and 4-3 on aggregate. His first was a curling free kick that he looped up and over the wall and into the goal, while his second, equally impressive strike saw him dink an outrageous lob from the edge of the area over Eduardo Lobos in goal and into the back of the net.

In the second half, at a time when Española needed to begin to control possession again, Huachipato came out of the blocks quickly, pouring men forward and peppering Lobos' goal with shots. The Huachipato midfield was very much on top at this stage, while Española, taking every opportunity to slow the game down from the hour mark onwards, had an appeal for a penalty waved away by the referee.

The home team was now doing all the running in the match and the Española team that progressed seamlessly into the finals against the most difficult opponents in the playoffs showed no attacking ambition, with only Emiliano Vecchio looking like he might snatch a goal.

In the closing stages of the match Española's tactics were clear — keep possession so that their opponents couldn't grab a dramatic late equalizer. This tactic seemed to be working up until the 88th minute, when Manuel Villalobos' left-footed volley took Huachipato to a deserved 3-1 lead on the night and 4-4 on aggregate.

The dreaded penalty shootout beckoned. Unión Española's Vecchio and Huachipato's Rodríguez calmly slotted the opening two penalties, while a missed strike from Sebastián Jaime and Villalobos' saved effort ensured the score stayed at a tense 1-1 in the shootout. After seeing Patricio Rubio convert for Española, Huachipato's



A Sao Paulo in delight showing off club colours at the Morumbi stadium.

goalscoring hero González, who dragged his team back in to the match, inexplicably ballooned his effort over the bar.

The nerves were evident on the faces of the players at this stage. César Cortés levelled the score at 2-2 before Lobos and Miguel Aceval both had their penalties saved. The shootout then went into sudden death and after Española's Braulio Leal missed, defender Omar Merlo slotted his penalty home to win the Clausura for Huachipato.

Huachipato won the shootout with jubilant scenes at the end, as the home fans cheered and the players surrounded each other, celebrating their victory over an Española team that had seemed invincible earlier in the playoffs, but fell at the final hurdle with a disappointing second half display.

MARQUEZ IN TALKS FOR RETURN

Rafa Marquez's time in Major League Soccer appears to be coming to an end. The New York Red Bulls defender is in Mexico City working on a deal that will land him with Club Leon, according to a source close to the negotiations. He is expected to sign a two-year deal.

Elias Ayub, co-owner Carlos Slim's chief aide, is believed to be in Mexico's capital to finalize the move. Marquez, one of the Red Bulls' three Designated Players, has been a disappointment since signing with the Major League Soccer team from Barcelona in 2010. He has played just 35 of a possible 73 games while earning \$4.6 million, the second-highest salary in MLS. Marquez had been linked to return to Club Atlas - the place where the Mexican international began his professional career - over the past two offseasons. With an open DP spot, the Red Bulls may look to convince Brazilian star Kaká to leave Real Madrid. Kaká has an apartment in New York, and his brother Digao plays for the Red Bulls.



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London Calling



By Samuel Collins

With the Premier League just a couple of weeks away from the half-way point, this week's column focuses on the best performers of the campaign thus far. Always a controversial topic, the division has seen some stunning individual displays in the opening five months. Here goes...

Petr Cech - The truth is, there hasn't been what you would call, an 'outstanding' goalkeeper in the first half of the season. But one who has recaptured the form that once made him the best 'keeper in Europe is Cech. Not only is the 30-year old an excellent shot-stopper, and solid in the air, he's also a leader - taking the armband from John Terry during the defender's absences this season.

Pablo Zabaleta - Arguably the most underrated player in the division, the Argentine has enjoyed an excellent first-half of the season. Comfortable in various positions, Manchester City have fielded the former Espanyol man at right-back, where he has fended off competition from Maicon to retain his place. Solid, reliable, experienced, a top performer.

Per Mertesacker - Many questioned Arsene Wenger's decision to splash out £8m on the German international last summer, but the Arsenal centre-half has had an impressive few months of late. Vastly experienced, the 28-year old took a season to adapt to the pace of Eng-

Premier League nears half-way stage



Maroune Fellaini (Everton)

lish football, and the Gunners are now reaping the rewards - Arsenal have the third best defensive record in the league.

Ryan Shawcross - No one has made more blocks in the division than the Stoke defender. The former Manchester United reserve has been linked with a return to Old Trafford, and this is not surprising given the quality of Shawcross' displays. A fully committed, old-fashioned type of defender who improves with each season.

Leighton Baines - The Everton left-back is, quite simply, the best left-back in the Premier League. Sure, Ashley Cole is another exceptional player in this position, but is he as consistent as Baines? Many are asking that question now. Outstanding dribbling and crossing skills are matched with strong defensive abilities - the ex-Wigan man could even replace Cole at Chelsea this summer.



Pablo Zabaleta (Man City)

Marouane Fellaini - Another Everton player, Fellaini has made a spectacular start to the season. The tall, powerful Belgian has been deployed either as the forward or just off a forward with extremely positive results. 8 goals in 14 league games and numerous quality performances mean the 25-year old's price tag stands at £30m.

Mohamed Diame - When West Ham signed Diame from Wigan on a free transfer in the summer, not many battered an eyelid. Just a normal transfer from a struggler to a struggler, right? Wrong. The Senegalese powerhouse has been incredible for the Londoners, a driving force in midfield for the Hammers. A £3.5m release clause in his contract is attracting some of the big boys.

Juan Mata - Everyone knew the Spaniard was a quality player when Chelsea paid Valencia £23m for him, but Mata has stepped it up a level this season. The playmaker has al-

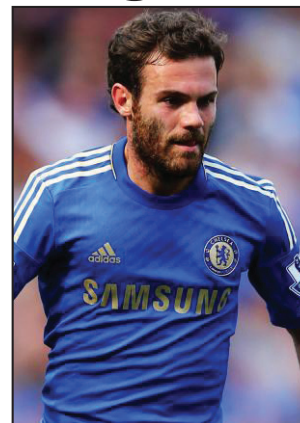


Michu (Swansea City)

ready equalled his league goal tally of last season (6), while his creativity skills have also been fully evident. A class act, who, at 24-years old, is still going to improve. A scary thought for opposing players.

Michu - Six months ago he cost Swansea £2m, now coach Michael Laudrup says he'd cost £30m. The former Rayo Vallecano leads the scoring charts (12 goals in 16 games) and is a huge favourite in Wales already. A major reason why Laudrup's side have enjoyed a thoroughly terrific first-half of the campaign.

Luis Suarez - For all of the Uruguayan's controversy - diving, racism et al - there can be no doubting Suarez' quality with a ball at his feet. The Liverpool striker has found the net 10 times, but it's his overall game - creating, dribbling, skill - that reveals his true class. His goal against Newcastle this season was arguably the goal of the season thus far.



Juan Mata (Chelsea)

Robin van Persie - Talking of controversy, Arsenal's decision to sell RVP to Manchester United for £24m in pre-season was heavily criticised by Gooners and media alike, and they've been proven right. 11 goals in 16 league games - including the winner in the Manchester derby recently - have helped Ferguson's side ease to a 6 point lead in the table. Meanwhile, Arsenal's season goes from bad to worse.

David Moyes (coach) - The long-serving Scot has been at the helm with Everton for a decade now, and this season has his best ever squad at his disposal. With the Merseysiders residing in 4th place - a lucrative Champions League place - at present, it remains to be seen whether Moyes can help the Blues stay there or not. But the 49-year old's ability to identify talent in the transfer market and formulate a successful hard-working side together is increasingly impressive. A major club surely awaits.

World Club Championship

Brazilian outfit Corinthians qualified for the FIFA Club World Cup final in Japan after a 1-0 win over Al Ahly on Wednesday.

Corinthians - the Copa Libertadores champions - will now meet either English Premier League giants Chelsea or Mexican outfit Monterrey in Sunday's decider.

Backed by a large amount of support inside the Toyota Stadium, Corinthians started brighter and had the first chance of the match when Douglas flashed a half volley wide after just nine minutes.

Ramy Rabia had a good effort at the other end for Al Ahly but Corinthians' all-round dominance was made to count on the half-hour mark.

Former Bayern Munich forward Paolo Guerrero was the scorer, with the Peruvian heading home a terrific cross from Douglas.

Al Ahly manager Hossam El-Badry introduced Mohamed Aboutrika in the second half and he made an immediate impact for the Egyptian side.

With Aboutrika impressing in midfield, Rabia, Soliman and Ahmed Fathy all had chances to level the scoreline in a much-improved second half.

But they were unable to get an equaliser as Corinthians held firm to seal their spot in the showpiece.

In the day's other match, J.League champions Sanfrecce Hiroshima won the fifth-placed playoff against Korea's Ulsan 3-2.

Ulsan took the lead thanks to a Hiroki Mizumoto own goal after 17 minutes but Satoru Yamagishi's strike, netted 10 minutes before the half-time break, brought them back into the game.

A double from Hisato Sato in the second half secured the win for Sanfrecce, despite Yong Lee's late consolation for the K-League side.



By Alex Milic

The Serbian Football Association will learn their fate when UEFA's control and disciplinary body meet to discuss the scenes that erupted during the Under 21s clash between Serbian and England in Krusevac.

According to UEFA, in light of the complex nature of the case, he hearing should have taken place on November 22, but was postponed "to allow for further investigations."

Following the second leg of a 2013 European Championship play-off in Krusevac, which England won 1-0 for a 2-0 aggregate triumph to reach next year's finals in Israel, ugly scenes erupted.

Connor Wickham's injury-time strike resulted in both sides clashing but as world media reports it is Serbia and only Serbia that should be blamed for the incidents.

There was also a backdrop of alleged racial abuse from the stands as England claimed some of their black players were victims which is the easiest excuse in many cases.

Full-back Danny Rose, dismissed after the final whistle for kicking the ball away in anger, complained



Scenes after the U21 clash between Serbia and England.

he had been particularly targeted for apparent racial abuse from the crowd, but what if the crowd were just booing him for his immature reactions after his send off and his aggressive and unsporting like performance during the match? Just 90 minutes after the game had ended, the FA made their feelings plain, issuing a statement condemning the racism - reporting a number of incidents to UEFA - and the confrontations that occurred, claiming England's players "were under extreme provocation". Of course the English FA will be favoured in this case as it has

more to lose compared to a little country like Serbia.

The Serbian FA countered the day after, denying there were any racist chants before and during the game, whilst claiming Rose behaved in an "inappropriate, unsportsmanlike and vulgar manner" towards their fans. UEFA quickly charged the Serbian FA with racist chanting, whilst also issuing a further charge to them and the FA with failure to control their players. The Serbians at least later reacted strongly in one sense by issu-

ing lengthy bans to two players and two officials for their part in the melee that occurred after the game.

Since the incident the FA have been in close contact with UEFA over the past two months, providing them with the required documentation and evidentiary support ahead of the hearing.

It is a question of awaiting a verdict now the dust has settled on the matter given the furore that unfolded in the days that followed. Professional Footballers' Association chairman Clarke Carlisle was amongst those who suggested

Serbia should receive a "significant" international ban.

Even Prime Minister David Cameron said he was "appalled" at the scenes, stating Britain expected "tough sanctions" if racism was proven.

That call was endorsed by Sports Minister Hugh Robertson who went so far as to write to UEFA president Michel Platini, in support of the FA, urging his governing body to take strong action.

Rose also stood his ground as he said he was "slapped twice" before he was dismissed following a game in which he claims he was subjected to "monkey chanting" throughout.

FA general secretary Alex Horne described the events in Serbia as "disgraceful", and suggested England would "question the validity of sending a team to Serbia in the future".

UEFA will certainly be expected to impose stiff penalties against Serbia, rather than any kind of desultory fine as occurred in 2007.

On that occasion the Serbian FA were fined 16,000 following a match between the two countries at the Under-21 European Championship in Holland when England defender Nedum Onuoha was racially abused.

The FA, meanwhile, have confirmed they are still awaiting to hear whether Under-21 players Steven Caulker and Tom Lees, along with coach Steve Wigley, are to be charged by Serbian police.

Spanish Copa Del Ray Wrap

Barcelona have defeated Cordoba 2-0 in the first leg of their Copa del Rey last-16 tie, while Real Madrid stumbled away at Celta Vigo.

Lionel Messi was the difference once again for Barcelona, scoring in either half to take his 2012 tally to 88 goals and put his side in pole position to advance to the quarter-finals ahead of their second-tier opponents.

In Vigo, Real had Cristiano Ronaldo to thank for giving them a crucial away goal after a disappointing match away from home.

Celta stunned their much-vaunted opponents in the 56th minute when Michael Krohn-Dehli's teasing cross found Mario Bermejo at the back post and the veteran forward side-footed the ball home from a tight angle.

The theme of Real's stuttering season continued 22 minutes later when Celta's pressure forced the capital club to cough up position and Cristian Bustos took advantage, driving forward with the ball and then smashing a brilliant strike from outside the box into the far top corner.

But with a second leg in Madrid to come, Ronaldo gave Real plenty of hope of progressing to the quarter-finals of the Copa del Rey, scoring in the 87th minute after timing his run expertly to get in behind Celta's defence.

In other first leg results in the Round of 16, Sevilla look to have just about qualified after smashing Mallorca 5-0, Valencia won 2-0 away to Osasuna and Atletico Madrid triumphed 3-0 over Getafe.

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EPL

Wrap

By Andrew Bishara

Dirty Derby Fallout

When Robin Van Persie scored the winner in the 92nd minute of extra time to give Manchester United, a gripping 3-2 win over title challengers and most hated rivals, City, it ended a pulsating match. After a Wayne Rooney double in the first half, City mounted a comeback thanks to goals from Pablo Zabaleta and Yaya Toure to level the scores.

Queue the wild celebrations then, when RVP settled the score. Yet, it will be marred by the trouble that followed. United defender Rio Ferdinand, celebrating wildly in front of the City fans, was hit by a coin above his eye. With blood streaming out, a City fan ran out on to pitch to settle the score, before being held back by keeper Joe Hart.

Since then, the FA has opened an investigation into the incident, liaising with the Greater Manchester Police in regards to the incidents.

Gordon Taylor, the Chief Executive of the Professional Players' Association has called for greater protection of players. His idea was to install "protection nets" around the ground to avoid, objects being thrown and fans invading the pitch.

In a radio interview with the BBC, Taylor said: "I think you've got to give consideration to possibly, as has been suggested, some netting



Rio Ferdinand shows the scars of battle this week.

in vulnerable areas, be it behind the goals and round the corner flags."

The idea stems from other European leagues, including the German Bundesliga, where the net is used to safe guard the players.

It wasn't the first time in the match that missiles were thrown. Whilst taking a corner, Wayne Rooney was plummeted with objects by City fans and luckily was not struck. It is the second time it has happened to Rooney, following similar incidents against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

The incident is the latest of a string of cases in the last few months where fans are caused problems. In October, Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper Chris Kirkland was struck in the face when a Leeds fan ran onto the field.

Earlier in the year, former Leeds star Alan Smith had to be rescued by police after he was mobbed by Huddersfield fans at the final whistle of MK Dons' visit to the Galpharm Stadium.

Yet, that wasn't the only controversy. Ashley Cole's mother and brother tweeted their pleasure that Ferdinand was hit by the coin.

However Cole's mother has since denied it and Ferdinand has not responded to the tweets.

It brings into question Ferdinand's decision to celebrate in front of City supporters was the right call. Former United player Paddy Crerand lost his cool on radio, when listeners suggested that Ferdinand was to blame and players shouldn't be celebrating in front of opposing fans.

This isn't the first time it has happened. Back in 2007, Gary Neville incurred the wrath of Liverpool fans, when he celebrated in front of them; and in 2010, Emmanuel Adebayor celebrated in front of Arsenal fans. Both received fines for their actions.

It's a sad state when players are restricted to celebrate because of the idiocy of fans. Players are abused outright throughout the games with horrendous chants. Is it that offensive to fans for someone to punch their fist in the air? Football fans need to get a grip, because the net is coming on around them and soon, they will be punished for it.

ENGLAND EPL													Last 5 games Most recent first	
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts						
1 Manchester United	16	13	0	3	40	23	+17	39	WWWL					
2 Manchester City	16	9	6	1	30	14	+16	33	LDWDW					
3 Chelsea	16	8	5	3	28	17	+11	29	WLDDL					
4 Everton	16	6	8	2	27	20	+7	26	WDDDL					
5 Tottenham Hotspur	16	8	2	6	29	25	+4	26	LWWWL					
6 West Bromwich ...	16	8	2	6	24	21	+3	26	LLLWW					
7 Arsenal	16	6	6	4	26	16	+10	24	WLDDW					
8 Swansea City	16	6	5	5	26	21	+5	23	LWWDDW					
9 Stoke City	16	5	8	3	14	12	+2	23	DWWWD					
10 Liverpool	16	5	7	4	22	20	+2	22	WWLDW					
11 West Ham United	16	6	4	6	21	20	+1	22	LWLLD					
12 Norwich City	16	5	7	4	17	24	-7	22	WWDDW					
13 Fulham	16	5	5	6	27	27	+0	20	WLDLL					
14 Newcastle United	16	4	5	7	18	23	-5	17	LWLLL					
15 Sunderland	16	3	7	6	17	21	-4	16	WLDDL					
16 Southampton	16	4	3	9	22	32	-10	15	WLDWW					
17 Aston Villa	16	3	6	7	12	23	-11	15	DDWDL					
18 Wigan Athletic	16	4	3	9	17	30	-13	15	DLLWL					
19 Reading	16	1	6	9	19	31	-12	9	LLLLL					
20 QPR...	16	0	7	9	13	29	-16	7	DDDLL					

EPL Preview

A recent stats analysis was conducted, which found that if games had ended at the 80 minutes mark, instead of the regular 90 minutes, Tottenham Hotspurs would be on top of the table.

Some might say it's a pointless stat. In the grand scheme of things, it is, but if you were a Spurs fan you could be encouraged at the stat. It shows Tottenham are playing well and that fading out of games can be fixed. Which means, when Andre Villas-Boas gets around to it, Spurs can be force in the Premier League.

Currently, they are sitting 5th on the ladder, equal on points with Everton, who are holding position in the last Champions League place. It could be said, that nothing has changed under Villas-Boas reign compared to the Harry Redknapp's. There is though, a plethora of differences.

Spurs are more fluid in their play and more diverse in their tactics. AVB has made them switch formations seamlessly, when needed, as well as instructing players to play different roles throughout the game.

There is also the defensive factor. At Chelsea, he was known for his gung-ho style and relegating his defensive duties. At Tottenham, he has often gone to a defensive structure and playing a very counter-attacking game.

Mainly, AVB himself is a different person. His stint at Chelsea destroyed him, where player mutiny was the reason for his downfall. Whereas at Chelsea, he caused problems with a number of players, including Alex, Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka, he hasn't made the same mistake twice.

His decision to include and make fringe players, Tom Huddlestone and Michael Dawson part of the squad, despite the fact that he wanted to seal them earlier in the year, highlights his new found flexibility.

The problems of conceding late can be attributed to a lack of confidence of finishing off games, as well as fatigue of players. AVB has been known to playing his best players and squad in Europa League games, where he has received criticism for it.

It's unjust though. Spurs are through to the next round and are in with a chance to win the tourna-

ment. In England it is considered a waste of time for teams. Therefore, credit is due to AVB for focusing on claiming a trophy. If Tottenham are to be considered a "top team", they must be willing to try and compete for every trophy.

AVB was quick to deny the claims though: "I don't agree that the Europa League has affected us physically in the league games as some of our best performances this season have come on the Sunday after a European game. So that is not the problem. It's the nature of the game"

As AVB mentioned, "the league is very tight at the moment" and a run of a couple of wins and the unpredictably of the league, means Spurs have every chance to make it in top four.

And their run could start this week, where they host Swansea, who are in a good from themselves, under new boss Michael Laudrup. Swansea represent everything that AVB wants Spurs to represent: flowing, fast and slick football. AVB has been given a second chance to make his dream become a reality with Spurs. He better not bugger it up.

London Eye




By Eddie Gray

Six points clear at the top of the Premier League, qualification for the Champions league knockout phases already secured and a fantastic 92nd minute winner against their closest title rivals would usually mean everything was rosy Manchester United.

But that is far from the case. United's inherent defensive problems have caused them trouble all year and have had to be heavily reliant on their attacking options to get them out of trouble.

If it weren't for Robin Van Persie, Wayne Rooney, Javier Hernandez, Danny Welbeck and co, the Red Devils would be nowhere near the summit of the Premier League.

So why have a team, who conceded 28 goals in the 09-10 season, 37 in 10-11 and 33 last year, let in 23 goals already this campaign after just 16 games?

One obvious difference is the lack of a first choice goalkeeper.

In the past two years the Manchester club have chopped and changed between David De Gea and Anders Lindegaard with nei-

ther one cementing themselves in the number one jersey, unlike previous campaigns when the defence was fully aware the commanding presence of Edwin Van Der Sar was behind them.

This indecision between the sticks has caused the back four to look bereft of confidence and perform way below what you would expect from a championship challenging outfit.

Collectively they have shown little unity and solidarity with opposition strike forces getting in behind at will, as well as being woefully unorganised from set pieces.

The latter was blatantly evident against Reading when the men from Old Trafford conceded two from in-swinging corners.

There was an alarming absence of physicality at set plays, which United have been missing since Nemanja Vidic was injured last year, that allowed Reading to bully their way past their markers and find the back of the net.

In that game it was Jonny Evans who lost his man to allow the Royals to score but it was a rare bad performance for the Northern Irish man, who has been exceptional this season in a struggling defensive unit after a difficult start to his Manchester United career.

Another individual who has impressed this term has been right back Rafael Da Silva.

The fullback has adapted his game and is now far more reliable and consistent with his per-

Frailties at the back are a concern for the EPL league leaders.

United give chasing pack hope

formances, with his previously trademark lunges no longer a feature of his play.

However, the remaining two positions in the back four have left United in trouble.

Rio Ferdinand, who has occupied the other central defensive berth for the majority of the season, has looked a distance off his previous best.

The England international has lost a yard of pace and struggled to adapt his game initially, with his lack of speed being exploited, most notably when he was left one on one with Gareth Bale

which saw the Welshman skip past him with ease and neatly finish.

But after a turbulent start the experienced professional has learnt and added a new style to his arsenal and has been far stronger in recent weeks.

However, the real issue has come in the left back position.

Patrice Evra has been a permanent fixture in the United line up since his transfer from Monaco in 2005, but in the last three years has shown signs that playing near on every game in every season since his move has

caught up with him.

The defender has become far less effective going forward, an aspect of his game that he was once regarded as the best of the world at, with his head down approach often compromising attacks rather than assisting them.

But it is defensively where the Frenchman has been at his poorest.

Evra seem to have adopted a square on technique when in a one on one situation which makes beating him on the outside seem relatively simple.

His method has been exposed by many, with wingers turning him easily and getting in behind, leaving the left back unable to recover because he is so flat footed.

This habit has been evident in the former Monaco players play for three years now and yet he still remains an integral figure in the United defence, a huge sign he is a massive character off the field, a valued leader and regarded highly by his fellow players.

Despite still being a crucial figure around Old Trafford his talents are clearly on the decline and the strongest indication was given this summer that Evra's playing days for United were numbered when Sir Alex Ferguson chased Leighton Baines.

Although put off in the summer, due to an inflated fee, United look set to return for the England fullback in January as Evra has failed to show signs he is going to return to his imperious best.

Ferguson will be hoping in the brief period before the new year Evra's form will return, but when the window opens the United boss is unlikely to waste anytime in hunting down a replacement for his current left back.

With PSG rumoured to be in pursuit of Evra the move for Baines looks a strong possibility, but despite the Frenchman's poor performances of late his excellent displays at the start of his United career should not be forgotten, after all it was during this time he was arguably regarded as the best left back in the world.



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Wrap
Italia

By Luca Cetta

Are Inter the real anti-Juve?

Inter leapfrogged Napoli following their win in Milan, while Juventus welcomed back Antonio Conte in the best possible manner. Milan continued their recent revival as Roma and Fiorentina played out a thriller.

In August, Juventus were seen as favourites to retain their Serie A crown after strengthening their squad. The question then was who would challenge the Bianconeri? As Juve continued their unbeaten streak during the opening rounds, Napoli were the first to challenge their supremacy. They travelled to Turin but left defeated. Their 'anti-Juve' tag dissipated. When Inter conquered Turin they were hailed as the biggest challengers. But poor form thereafter made those who hailed Andrea Stramaccioni's men have serious doubts.

Going into their clash at the Stadio Giuseppe Meazza, Napoli had experienced a solid run of form to trail Juve by two points. They led Inter by the same amount. Esteban Cambiasso started in central defence with Walter Samuel suspended, while Antonio Cassano returned from his own ban. Napoli's Goran Pandev was on the bench after weeks out with



Pablo Daniel Osvaldo #9 with his teammates of AS Roma, celebrates after scoring the fourth goal in the 4-2 win over Fiorentina.

injury.

Inter scored with their first chance when Cassano's corner reached Fredy Guarin at the back post. The Colombian ghosted into the area to volley from close range. At the other end Lorenzo Insigne and Marek Hamsik went close. Before the break Guarin threaded through for Diego Milito, who drilled a shot low into the far corner to double the advantage. Cassano struck the post just after the restart, but the lead was then halved. Pandev and Christian Maggio were denied, only for Edinson Cavani to bundle the ball over the line. Further chances went begging as Inter held on for a 2-1 win to move into second and perhaps finally confirm their 'anti-Juve' status. Even if it is a tag Stramaccioni wants to avoid.

"We are not the anti-Juve, we are not the anti-anything," said the coach. "The last time that you landed us with that epithet we crumbled. Jokes apart we will en-

joy this victory, but tomorrow we will be concentrated on Lazio." The gap to Juventus is now four points after the Bianconeri defeated Palermo. Antonio Conte made his long awaited return to the bench and saw Mirko Vucinic hit the woodwork twice. Amid a hailstorm and heavy pitch, the Montenegrin fed Stephan Lichtsteiner and the Swiss international netted the only goal of the game five minutes after the restart. Antonio Nocerino gifted Torino an opener at home to Milan with a backpass to nobody. Meant for goalkeeper Marco Amelia, it fell horribly short and Mario Santana accepted the gift. But Milan showed they are on the right path as Robinho danced his way through to equalise.

Jean Francois Gillet had a second half to forget as he failed to adequately deal with a cross, allowing Nocerino to atone for his error. Giampaolo Pazzini then netted from a tight angle, while

ITALY	Serie A										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5Games Most recent first		
1 Juventus	16	12	2	2	33	10	+23	38	WWLDW		
2 Internazionale	16	11	1	4	29	17	+12	34	WWLDL		
3 Napoli	16	10	3	3	29	14	+15	33	LWWDD		
4 Lazio	16	9	3	4	24	18	+6	30	DWDDW		
5 Roma	16	9	2	5	38	26	+12	29	WWWWL		
6 Fiorentina	16	8	5	3	29	18	+11	29	LDDWW		
7 Milan	16	7	3	6	28	21	+7	24	WWDDL		
8 Udinese	16	5	7	4	24	24	+0	22	WWLDD		
9 Catania	16	6	4	6	22	24	-2	22	WLLWD		
10 Atalanta	16	7	2	7	17	23	-6	21	WLLWL		
11 Parma	16	5	5	6	19	22	-3	20	LLWDD		
12 Chievo	16	5	3	8	19	27	-8	18	WWDL		
13 Sampdoria	16	5	3	8	19	23	-4	17	LDDWL		
14 Cagliari	16	4	4	8	14	26	-12	16	LLDD		
15 Bologna	16	4	3	9	17	20	-3	15	DWLWL		
16 Torino	16	3	7	6	17	21	-4	15	LLDLW		
17 Palermo	16	3	5	8	14	23	-9	14	LLWLW		
18 Pescara	16	4	2	10	12	30	-18	14	WLLLL		
19 Genoa	16	3	3	10	16	28	-12	12	LLWLL		
20 Siena	16	4	5	7	15	20	-5	11	LLDWD		

Stephan El Shaarawy kept up his scoring ways after another Gillet blunder. Rolando Bianchi scored a consolation as Milan left Turin 4-2 winners.

That matched the score in Rome. Fiorentina midfielder David Pizarro missed the contest against his former club after flying back to Chile at the news of his sister's death. Stevan Jovetic again missed out for the Viola.

Leandro Castan nodded in after seven minutes, only for Fiorentina to spring the offside trap and level through Facundo Roncaglia. Francesco Totti netted a superb brace to restore the lead, but Mounir El Hamdaoui reduced the deficit seconds after the restart. Substitute Pablo Osvaldo secured Roma's win towards the end, drawing to a close this breathtaking match.

Elsewhere, Atalanta defeated Parma 2-1, as Chievo registered a shock 2-0 win at Cagliari. Pescara heaped more misery on Luigi Del Neri with a 2-0 win over Genoa.

Siena scored first but lost 3-1 at home to Catania. On Monday evening Udinese claimed a 2-0 win at Sampdoria, while Bologna and Lazio played out a 0-0 stalemate.

This weekend's marquee match sees Lazio hosting Inter. After drawing on Monday, Lazio remained entrenched in European contention, but have now slipped three points behind the Champions League zone. Miroslav Klose was only fit enough for the bench on Monday but will likely start, given his replacement Libor Kozak was sent off. The Nerazzurri will be aiming to build on that win over Napoli and attempt to close the gap to Juventus. Samuel returns from suspension and Stramaccioni can rely on what is a fairly settled XI.

Juventus host Atalanta aiming to keep their gap going into Christmas. They face the Bergamo club without Leonardo Bonucci, who reached the yellow card limit in Palermo after being booked for a

hilariously awful dive. Sebastian Giovinco returns from a one-match stop for the match against the tenth-placed team, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

Fiorentina, Napoli and Milan all have winnable clashes at home. Vincenzo Montella's men host bottom-placed Siena in the Tuscan Derby, while Napoli will aim to bounce back against a Bologna outfit hovering above the relegation zone. Milan are one of Serie A's in-form teams but remain nine points away from the coveted third position. They host Pescara, who will be buoyed by last week's win, their first under Cristiano Bergodi.

Elsewhere, Catania hosts Sampdoria, while Chievo will aim to continue their recent run of form at home against Roma. Genoa are desperately in need of a win at home to Torino, as Parma and Cagliari look to recover from recent defeats. Finally, Udinese hosts Palermo.

Leo Messi breaks world record, Radamel Falcao breaks Deportivo



Viva
Espana

By Pepe Lopez

Leo Messi overcame a knee injury to line up for Barcelona away to Real Betis this past weekend at Estadio Benito Villamarin in Sevilla. It took Messi just 25 minutes to score the 2 goals required to surpass the previous world record tally of 85 goals in 1 calendar year, by Germany's ex-Bayern Munich striker Gerd Muller, achieved in 1972, some 40 years ago.

Speaking to sport1.de, Germany's Gerd Muller had these kind words to share;

"My record stood for 40 years - 85 goals in 60 games - and now the best player in the world has broken it, and I'm delighted for him. He is an incredible player, gigantic. He's such a nice and modest professional and I hope he gets one or two more goals in 2012 and that he can then hold onto the record for the next 40 years. He's fantastic. He only has one defect and that is that he doesn't play for Bayern Munich."

Meanwhile, back in the Spanish capital of Madrid, nearest and ironic La Liga title challenger,



Messi Magic! Leo makes it 86 goals in 343 days ...

Atletico Madrid, kept up some small amount of pressure on Catalan club FC Barcelona with a 6-0 demolition of Galacian side Deportivo La Coruna. Brazilian Diego Costa opened the scoring after 23 minutes, before the Colombian ace, Radamel Falcao scored an unforgettable 5 goals in the space of just the next 48 minutes of match play.

Speaking with Spanish media, Radamel Falcao was quoted as saying;

"It was an unforgettable evening. I did not expect many goals, but our team play must be emphasised. It's nice to be the only player to ever score five goals and I'm very excited to be involved in the club's

history. I do not think about being as big as Ronaldo or Messi. My dream is to make and grow."

Despite the whopping 60 million Euro get out contractual clause with Atletico Madrid, Falcao has no shortage of willing buyers this January transfer window, with Chelsea, Manchester City, Paris St Germain and Real Madrid the media's documented entities. Such is the demand, it is now reported that Atletico Madrid are willing to offer Falcao a new contract to replace his existing contract, which still has 3 and half years to run, in order to increase the buy-out clause. It was reported in the Spanish media that Falcao would be offered a new 7 million Euro per season contract

SPAIN	La Liga										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5Games Most recent first		
1 Barcelona	15	14	1	0	50	17	+33	43	WWWWW		
2 Atlético Madrid	15	12	1	2	35	13	+22	37	WLWWW		
3 Real Madrid	15	10	2	3	37	12	+25	32	WWLWW		
4 Málaga	15	7	4	4	23	10	+13	25	WLWDL		
5 Real Betis	15	8	1	6	24	26	-2	25	LWWLL		
6 Levante	15	7	3	5	20	21	-1	24	WDLWL		
7 Getafe	15	7	2	6	18	20	-2	23	DWWLL		
8 Real Valladolid	15	6	3	6	22	18	+4	21	LWWLD		
9 Real Sociedad	15	6	3	6	22	19	+3	21	DWDWW		
10 Valencia	15	6	3	6	19	23	-4	21	WLLWD		
11 Sevilla	15	5	4	6	21	22	-1	19	DLLWL		
12 Real Zaragoza	15	6	1	8	18	23	-5	19	WDLWL		
13 Rayo Vallecano	15	6	1	8	18	32	-14	19	LLWLW		
14 Athletic Club	15	5	3	7	20	32	-12	18	WLDLW		
15 Celta de Vigo	15	4	3	8	16	20	-4	15	LDWDL		
16 Osasuna	15	3	4	8	12	16	-4	13	LWDDW		
17 Mallorca	15	3	4	8	14	27	-13	13	LDLDL		
18 Granada	15	3	3	9	11	24	-13	12	LDLLW		
19 Espanyol	15	2	5	8	15	24	-9	11	DDLLL		
20 Deportivo La C...	15	2	5	8	21	37	-16	11	LLDLL		

extension by Atletico Madrid.

An unlikely win by Atletico Madrid at Camp Nou this weekend, would bridge the gap at the top of the La Liga standings to just 3 points, with the return match between the two clubs at Atletico's Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid in May. Meaning Atletico Madrid still control their destiny and can still win La Liga without having to rely on other results. However, leading European based bookmaker www.bwin.com has listed Barcelona at just \$1.12 for every \$1 spent on Barcelona to win La Liga, and Atletico Madrid at \$26 to win La Liga, way behind Real Madrid at \$6.75.



... and the press hail the extraordinary achievement.



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Werder Bremen v Nürnberg	
Croatia	
Osijek v Dinamo Zagreb	League
Inter Zaprešić v Zadar	enters winter
Split v Zagreb	break
Istra 1961 v Lokomotiva	and resumes again
Cibalia v Osijek	in February
Dinamo Zagreb v Rijeka	2013
Slaven Koprinivica v Hajduk Split	
Serbia	
Hajduk Kula v Jagodina	League
Donji Srem v OFK Beograd	enters
BSK Borča v Partizan	winter break
Spartak Subotica v Sloboda Užice	and
Smederevo v Vojvodina	resumes
Crvena Zvezda v Javor Ivanjica	again in
Radnički 1923 ... v Rad Beograd	February
Radnički Niš v Novi Pazar	2013

Millwall v Leicester City
Cardiff City v Peterborough U...
Brighton & Hov... v Nottingham Forest
Burnley v Watford
Middlesbrough v Wolverhampton ...
Birmingham City v Crystal Palace
Blackpool v Blackburn Rovers
Bolton Wanderers v Charlton Athletic
Bristol City v Derby County
Leeds United v Ipswich Town
Barnsley v Sheffield Wedn...

English League One

Notts County v Brentford
Shrewsbury Town v Carlisle United
Doncaster Rovers v Coventry City
Crewe Alexandra v Bury
Stevenage v Crawley Town
Portsmouth v Preston North End
Leyton Orient v Scunthorpe United
Walsall v Yeovil Town
Sheffield United v Tranmere Rovers
Milton Keynes Dons v Hartlepool United
Oldham Athletic v Swindon Town
AFC Bournemouth v Colchester United

...Results...Results....Results....Results....Results....Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...

SCOTLAND

Kilmarnock 1 - 3Celtic
Heart of Midlo... 2 - 0 Aberdeen
Inverness CT 3 - 0Hibernian
Motherwell 3 - 2Ross County
St. Mirren 1 - 1St. Johnstone
Dundee 0 - 3Dundee United

TURKEY

Beşiktaş 2 - 2 Eskişehirspor
Elazığspor 1 - 0 Mersin İdmanyurdu
Kasımpaşa 2 - 2 Gençlerbirliği
Gaziantepspor 0 - 2 Karabükspor
Sivasspor 1 - 3 Galatasaray
Bursaspor 1 - 0 Orduspor
Trabzonspor 1 - 1 Kayserispor
Akhisar Beledi... SUSP Antalyaspor
Fenerbahçe 2 - 1 İstanbul BB

Scotland

Aberdeen v Kilmarnock
Celtic v St. Mirren
Dundee United v Inverness CT
Hibernian v Motherwell
St. Johnstone v Heart of Midlo...
Ross County v Dundee

Greece

- Kerkyra v Panthrakikos
- OFI v Asteras Tripolis
- Panionios v Olympiakos Piraeus
- Aris v Xanthi
- AEK Athens v Atromitos
- Levadiakos v Platania
- Veria v Panathinaikos
- PAS Giannina v PAOK

Turkey

Eskişehirspor v Bursaspor
Mersin İdmanyurdu v Akhisar Beledi...
Elazığspor v Gaziantepspor
Gençlerbirliği v Beşiktaş
İstanbul BB v Trabzonspor
Karabükspor v Sivasspor
Orduspor v Antalyaspor
Galatasaray v Fenerbahçe
Kayserispor v Kasımpaşa

Holland

Twente V Heracles
PEC Zwolle v AZ
Groningen v VVV
Roda JC v NAC Breda
NEC v PSV
Utrecht v Heerenveen
Vitesse v RKC Waalwijk
Feyenoord v ADO Den Haag
Willem II v Ajax

Portugal

Vitória Setúbal v Porto
Beira-Mar v Rio Ave
Ohanense v Gil Vicente
Nacional v Sporting CP
Benfica v Marítimo
Moreirense v Académica
Sporting Braga v Estoril
Paços de Ferreira v Vitória Guimarães



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